

The Story of
"Les Misérables"

Adapted from the French
of Victor Hugo
by

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Illustrated by Frank Gillett, R.I.

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HE FOLLOWED JEAN VALJEAN LIKE A DOG

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THE STORY OF “LES MISÉRABLES”

THE BISHOP AND THE CONVICT

In 1815, the year of the battle of Waterloo, Charles-François-Bienvenu Myriel was Bishop of D—— in France. Everybody called him Monseigneur Bienvenu. Monseigneur (my lord) is the proper title for a bishop in France, and Bienvenu, besides being one of his proper names, means Welcome; we shall soon see why the people called him so. The Bishop had only two other persons in the house with him; his sister and his servant. His sister was about sixty-five (the Bishop himself was about seventy-five); she was called Mademoiselle Baptistine. She was tall and thin, pale and gentle; she had never been pretty, but having passed her whole life in good works, she had gained what may be called the beauty of goodness. She seemed to have hardly enough body to contain her beautiful and shining spirit. The servant

was called Madame Magloire; she also was over sixty, and she had been with Monseigneur Bienvenu since long before he was made Bishop of D——. She was white, fat, busy, always panting, partly on account of her activity and partly because she suffered from asthma. ઇન્દ્રાસ

Until 1806 Monseigneur Bienvenu had been a poor country clergyman; in that year he was made Bishop by Napoleon I, who was then Emperor of France, and who had happened to see him and to be struck by a few words he spoke. The Bishop's palace at D—— was very splendid: the rooms were large and magnificent like those of a nobleman, and there were a great many of them—a set of apartments for the Bishop, drawing-rooms, bedrooms for guests, a great court with cloisters all round it, gardens planted with glorious trees. Above all there was on the ground floor an immense banqueting-hall, and it was in this that the Bishop was talking, three days after his arrival, with the manager of the hospital, a little building next door to the palace, which the Bishop had just visited.

“Sir,” said the Bishop, “how many patients have you just now?”

“Twenty-six, my lord.”

“So I counted,” said the Bishop.

“The beds are very close together,” said the manager.

“So I noticed.”

“The wards are only ordinary rooms and it is very difficult to ventilate them.”

“That is what struck me.”

"And then, when there is a little sunshine, the garden is very small for those who are getting well."

"So I said to myself."

"When there has been an infectious disease about, we have sometimes had as many as a hundred patients, and then we don't know what to do."

"That idea occurred to me."

"Well, my lord," said the manager, "we must make up our minds to it."

The Bishop looked about the room; then he said to the manager:

"Sir, how many beds would this hall alone hold?"

"Your lordship's banqueting-hall?" said the manager in bewilderment.

"It would take quite twenty beds!" said the Bishop as if to himself; then to the manager, "Do you know, sir, there is evidently some mistake. There are twenty-six of you in five or six little rooms. There are three of us and we have room for sixty. Evidently you have my house and I have yours: let us change back."

So next day the hospital patients were moved into the Bishop's palace and the Bishop went to live in the cottage.

The Bishop's salary was fifteen thousand francs a year, but he kept for himself only one thousand francs, that is about £40, and gave all the rest to charitable institutions and to the poor. Besides his salary he had an allowance for keeping horses and carriages, but he never drove, and gave all this money too to the poor. He visited all his

people very diligently; when he had money, he went to see the poor, and when he had none, he went to see the rich. His diocese, that is the country all around D——, over which he was Bishop, was in some parts very mountainous, but this did not prevent him from going to see the people in even the smallest and farthest villages. Once he arrived at a certain town riding on an ass. The mayor and the principal people of the town came to meet him at the gate. When they saw the ass they could not hide their disgust, for they expected him to come in a splendid carriage with a pair of horses.

"Mr. Mayor and gentlemen," said the Bishop, "I see you are shocked, and no wonder; you think it shows great pride in a poor priest to ride on the animal which carried Our Lord; but I assure you I did it from necessity, not from vanity."

The good Bishop loved everyone so much that he was never afraid. He took all the bolts and locks off his front door, so that anyone could come in, by day or night, by simply lifting the latch. Mademoiselle Baptistine and Madame Magloire could never feel quite happy about this, but they were always perfectly obedient to the Bishop, and his sister at least always felt in her heart that he must be right. The front door opened straight into the dining-room; from this a door opened into the Bishop's bedroom, and from the bedroom another door opened into the oratory, a little room where the Bishop used to pray, and where there was a spare bed in case

he wanted to take in a visitor. The two women slept upstairs. In his youth the Bishop had belonged to a rich family, but all that he had kept from that time was a soup-ladle, six spoons and forks, and a pair of candlesticks, all of massive silver. The candles were lighted only when there was a visitor; at other times there was a little oil lamp. They had much better food too, and some wine, when a visitor came; when they were alone they had as plain food as any of the peasants. When they went to bed, Madame Magloire used to put the silver into a little cupboard in the wall just above the head of the Bishop's bed; but the key was always left in the cupboard! It would take far too long to tell you all about the Bishop, so we will leave him now, and turn to the convict.

Jean Valjean was the son of a poor peasant. When he was a boy he never learned to read, and he soon took up his father's trade of wood-cutting. When his sister's husband died, and left her with seven little children, Jean Valjean supported her and them. He never thought he was doing anything specially good and generous, nor did they. He had no sweetheart; he had to work too hard to have any time for courting. Jean was always good to the children; he used to screen their little faults when he thought their mother would be too severe on them, for, with all her worries, she sometimes lost patience, and he never complained when she would take the best piece from his plate to give it to one of them.

One winter was very cold, and Jean could not get any work to do. There was nothing to be done in his trade, and though Jean tried his very best he could not get any other work. What was to be done? All the children would starve.

One evening a baker, as he was going to bed, heard a great noise, and running down to his shop, saw a man's arm passed through a hole made by breaking the bars and the glass. The man took a loaf and ran off. The baker ran after him shouting. The man was caught, and though he had thrown away the loaf, his bleeding arm showed him to be the thief. It was Jean Valjean. He was condemned for "theft and burglary" (that is, breaking open a house) to five years of the galleys. The laws in those times were terribly severe; his sentence meant that he was to be sent to a seaport, where he would have to work very hard, chiefly at rowing with a great many others in a long boat called a galley; the rowers had chains on their legs, and there was always with them a man with a stick to beat them if they did not work hard enough. Sometimes they loaded and unloaded ships, or did other work on shore, and then there were always men with loaded guns pointed at them all the time, so as to shoot them if they attempted to escape. Still the convicts were so miserable that they did sometimes try to get away. Jean Valjean tried four times, and each time three years were added to his sentence, and once he got two years more for resisting when he was captured; so that instead of five years he

had to stay nineteen years in that awful place. Now, it is very easy for us to say how silly it was of him not to be quiet, and then he could have come out in five years; but I suppose we can hardly tell, without having tried it, what the temptation would be if he saw the *slightest chance* of getting away *at once*.

Of course Jean Valjean was a very different man in 1815, when he came away from the galleys, from what he was when he went there in 1796. He was forty-six years old now, instead of twenty-seven; he had learnt to read, and to do marvellous feats of cunning, and he had thought a great deal. But his mind was full of bitterness and hatred against all the world; he did not know whom to blame for what had happened to him, so he blamed everybody. He knew he had been wrong in stealing the loaf, but he saw too that his punishment had been much too severe, and as he had brooded over this for nineteen years he had become filled with frightful thoughts of revenge, and his one idea was to do all the harm he could.

In this mood Jean Valjean came to the town of D—. He had been set free three days before, and had been given a yellow paper which he was obliged to show to the mayor of every town through which he passed; the paper said who he was, and added: "This man is very dangerous". He showed his paper to the mayor of D— and then went to the chief inn. Jean had some money, for they allowed the convicts to earn a little by their labour at the galleys; in nineteen years, working hard the

whole time, he had managed to earn about four pounds ten shillings! At first they received him at the inn, but a man there suspected him to be a convict, because his hair was cropped short; so he told the landlord, who then sent a message to the mayor, and when he heard who Jean really was, he told him he must go away. Jean had walked thirty-six miles that day and had nothing to eat, but he had to go, and presently he found a little inn in a side street. But here again they found out who he was and turned him away. It was dark now, and after wandering for some time Jean begged for hospitality at a peasant's house. But the news had gone about the town that there was a convict in it, so nobody would take him in; they were all afraid of him, and indeed it was natural, for he was very broad and strong, his clothes were all ragged, and his eyes were wild with hunger and misery. Presently he found a sort of outhouse with some straw in it, and crept in there to get shelter from the cold night wind; but in a moment he saw the fiery eyes of a great dog gleaming at him—it was the dog's house, and Jean had great difficulty in getting away from him, and got some fresh holes in his ragged clothes. Then he went to the cathedral square and lay on a stone bench, and a good woman who passed out of the cathedral said to him "Why do you lie there?"

"Because I have nowhere else to lie."

"Have you tried the inns?"

"Yes, the inns are full."

“Have you knocked at the doors?”

“Yes, I have tried that.”

“Have you tried *that* door?” (pointing to the Bishop’s).

“No.”

“Then try that.”

At eight o’clock that evening the Bishop was sitting in his bedroom, working hard at a book he was writing, when Madame Magloire came in to take the silver spoons and forks from the cupboard. This was a sign that supper was nearly ready. He came in to the dining-room and found Madame Magloire laying the table and talking very seriously to Mademoiselle Baptistine. The old servant wore a white cap with streamers, a white handkerchief, spotlessly clean, over her shoulders, a black serge dress, and an apron of a green-and-red check. Mademoiselle Baptistine’s dress was of the fashion of nine years before, and so was the way she wore her hair. Madame Magloire was saying that, while buying some provisions that evening, she had been told that there was a very suspicious sort of man about the town, and that people would do well to be on their guard and to *lock their doors* carefully. She looked at the Bishop as she said this.

“What is that you are saying?” asked the Bishop.

“I say, my lord, that this house is not at all safe, that if you will allow me, I will go and tell the locksmith to put on the old lock of the front door, and the bolts; it would only take a minute. And I say we *must* do it, my lord if it’s only for this night, for I say that a door which opens

from outside by a latch is most dreadful; besides, my lord, you always say 'Come in!' and even in the middle of the night, there is no need for anyone to ask permission...."

At this moment there was a violent knock at the door.

"Come in!" said the Bishop.

The door opened wide, and there appeared a man, not very tall, but very broad and strong-looking. His face was haggard and fierce, his hair was close-cropped, his eyes glared in the red light of the fire; his clothes were very ragged and covered with dust, on his back was a knapsack, and in one of his strong knotted hands he carried a thick stick. The expression of his face was at the same time rude, bold, wearied and violent. It was Jean Valjean. Madame Magloire was too frightened to shriek. She only shuddered, struck with horror. Mademoiselle Baptistine, who had her back to the door, turned half round and saw the man, then looked at her brother, and seeing him quite tranquil, she became so herself.

Before the Bishop could speak, the man told them who he was and how nobody would take him in. He spoke in a violent and desperate sort of way, and told the exact truth. When he had finished, the Bishop said: "Madame Magloire, lay another place, please."

The man stepped up to the table.

"You do not understand," he said. "I am a released convict. Here is my passport; you can read it." And he read it aloud to them, ending with, "This man is very dangerous."



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"I AM A RELEASED CONVICT"

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "you will put clean sheets on the bed in the oratory."

Madame Magloire left the room to do so.

"Sir," said the Bishop, "sit down and warm yourself. We will have supper in a minute, and your bed shall be made while you sup."

The man was overcome with surprise. He could not believe that anyone would be so kind to him. However, he ate his supper, and the Bishop had the silver candlesticks brought in, and the candles lighted, as he did for his most welcome guests. After supper, during which Jean Valjean told the Bishop about his miserable life, Monseigneur Bienvenu said:

"Sir, you must be tired; I will show you your room."

They had to pass through the Bishop's room to get to the oratory, and as they did so, Jean saw Madame Magloire putting away the spoons and forks in the cupboard above the Bishop's bed. Then they went on into the next room, and the Bishop showed Jean his bed.

"Thank you," he said, but then a sort of impulse made him turn fiercely and say: "Have you considered what you are doing? How do you know I am not a murderer?"

The Bishop replied gravely:

"I leave those things to God." And he blessed the man, who did not even bow his head. Then the Bishop went back to his room, and after some hours of study and prayer he went to bed, and slept peacefully.

Jean Valjean threw himself fully dressed on the bed, and slept soundly till about two o'clock. Then he awoke. The reason why he woke was that the bed was too good; he was accustomed only to a plank. He was now no longer tired, and he began thinking over all his sad life, up to the present time. Then he sat up on the bed; an idea had occurred to him. The silver soup-ladle and the six spoons and forks! One could get perhaps £10 for them—twice as much as he had earned in nineteen years!

He sat there about an hour; then suddenly he took off his shoes. Then he went on dreaming again, till he was roused by a clock striking the half-hour—half-past three. He got up and went softly to the window and looked out. There was a moon, but sometimes it was covered by clouds. It made just a little faint light indoors. Jean Valjean examined the window. It had no bars and opened into the garden. The garden was surrounded by a low wall which he could easily climb. Beyond the wall he could see a line of trees, which meant that there was a road there, for in France there are trees all along the roads.

Jean Valjean went to his knapsack, which he had put down by the bed, and took out from it an iron bar with a sharp point at one end. Then he put his shoes in his pocket, placed his stick near the window, pulled his cap down over his eyes and walked very softly to the door leading into the Bishop's bedroom. There he held his

breath and listened. There was no sound. He had his iron bar in his hand. He pushed the door gently, and it gave, for the Bishop had not quite shut it. It made no noise, and he pushed it a little more. It was now wide enough for him to pass, but there was a little table near it which was in the way. The door must be opened wider, so he gave it a good push; but this time the hinge, which was rather rusty, gave a frightful creak, loud and long like a cry!

Jean Valjean shuddered and his heart stood still. It sounded in his guilty ear like the clarion of the Last Judgment. He imagined that everyone in the house would wake and cry out; in a quarter of an hour the whole town would be awake, and the police would be upon him. He stood for some minutes, not daring to move; the door was now wide open, and when the beating of his heart grew less he could hear the gentle breathing of the Bishop in his sleep, undisturbed by the noise the hinge had made. Jean would not turn back. He crept on tiptoe to the bed, and at that moment the moon shone out, and lighted up the white hair and face of the good old man. His expression was utterly angelic; full of satisfaction, hope, and blessedness. On his forehead was a radiance which seemed like a reflection from the Heaven which he must be seeing in his dreams. The moonlight made a halo round his hair.

No one could say what feelings passed through Jean Valjean; he did not know himself. We know that he

had come out of prison full of bitter feelings and wanting to do all the harm he could; but then the Bishop had been so good to him, and he looked so beautiful and holy in his sleep. Jean was bewildered. He did not know whether to break the Bishop's head or to kiss his hand. He did neither; he crept cautiously up to the cupboard above the bed, and raised his iron bar to burst it open, but to his astonishment the key was in the lock. Then he lost not a minute; he opened the cupboard, took out the silver in its basket, strode back to his own room, opened the window, seized his stick, jumped out, stuffed the silver into his knapsack, threw down the basket, ran to the end of the garden, leapt the wall like a tiger and was gone.

Next morning at sunrise the Bishop was walking in his garden, as he generally was at that hour. Madame Magloire came running to him in horror.

“My lord, my lord,” she cried, “does your lordship know where the plate-basket is?”

“Yes,” said the Bishop.

“Thank goodness! I could not think what had become of it!”

The Bishop had just picked up the basket from a flower-bed. “Here it is,” said he.

“But *empty!*” cried Madame Magloire. “What about the silver?”

“Ah!” replied the Bishop. “It's the *silver* you're troubling about? I don't know where *that* is.”

"It must be the man! He has stolen it!" And Madame Magloire rushed off to the oratory, while the Bishop stooped over a lily which had been broken by the basket. It was soon evident that the man had gone, and taken the silver; his footmarks were traced to the wall.

"I was wrong to keep that silver," said the Bishop. "It was not mine; it belonged to the poor. Now we will have wooden spoons and forks." Then they sat down to breakfast, and the Bishop cheerfully pointed out to his sister, who said nothing, and to Madame Magloire, who was grumbling under her breath, that there was no need of a spoon or a fork to dip a piece of bread into a cup of milk. As they were getting up, there was a knock at the door. "Come in," said the Bishop.

The door opened, and showed Jean Valjean held by three policemen.

"My lord," said one of them. . . .

At this, Jean, who was hanging his head miserably, looked up in surprise.

"Then he isn't just an ordinary priest!" he murmured.

"Silence!" said the policeman. "It's his lordship, the Bishop."

The Bishop came up quickly to Jean.

"Ah, here you are!" he said. "I am glad to see you. But I gave you the silver candlesticks too; why didn't you take them? You may get £8 for them!"

Jean Valjean opened his eyes and looked at the Bishop with an expression which no language can describe.

"My lord," said the policeman, "there must be a mistake. We met this man; he was hurrying, and we found this silver upon him. He said you had given it him, but of course we did not believe him."

"Yes, there has been a mistake," said the Bishop. "Let the man go. Good-morning to you."

The policemen went. The two women said nothing. Then the Bishop took the two candlesticks and gave them to Jean Valjean, who trembled in every limb.

"Now," said the Bishop, "go in peace. And another time, when you come, you need not go out by the garden; the front door is always unlocked, my friend."

Jean Valjean seemed ready to faint.

The Bishop came near to him and said in a low tone, but very seriously:

"Do not forget, *never* forget that you have promised me to use that money in becoming an honest man."

Jean Valjean was silent; he remembered no such promise. The Bishop added solemnly:

"Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. I have bought your soul; I take it away from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God."

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The good Bishop became blind soon after these events, but he never felt his loss, for he was waited on by his sister with the most perfect devotion, until his peaceful end.

MONSIEUR MADELEINE

There was once a town in France in which nearly everyone was happy; it shall be called M——. The reason why the people were happy was that nearly all the power and influence were in the hands of a very good man, named Monsieur Madeleine. The chief industry of the town was the making of artificial jet, and the great factory which carried it on belonged to Monsieur Madeleine. He employed everyone who came and asked for work, whether man or woman, so that no one need be afraid of starving; and besides this, he had given the money for keeping up ten beds at the hospital, a dispensary at the factory, where the workpeople could get medicines for nothing, and he even had a little hospital in his own house, where, if any of them got very ill, they were nursed by two Sisters of Charity. Although Monsieur Madeleine was very rich, and was said to have enormous sums in a bank in Paris, he lived very plainly indeed; he always took his meals alone, and hardly went into society at all. He had a small but well-chosen library, and seemed to spend a good deal of time in cultivating his mind, and during the five years which had passed between his first coming to M—— and the beginning of this story, it was observed that his language had grown much more refined and choice.

Nobody in M—— knew who Monsieur Madeleine was, and the poor people did not much care, as long as he was good to them; but rich idle people, who had nothing better to do, spent much time in guessing and trying to find out about him. All that was to be discovered, however, was that he seemed about fifty, that he had come to M—— in 1815, and was then quite a poor man; that he had invented a process by which artificial jet could be made much more cheaply than before, and had used the little money he then had in starting this process; that it had been most successful, so that Monsieur Madeleine had very quickly risen to his present position. This was all that could be discovered as to his history, but anyone who watched him could see that he was peculiar in many ways. He was very strong indeed, and was always ready to help when there was a fallen horse to be got up, a wagon to be pulled out of the mud, or a runaway bull to be stopped. He was also very clever with his fingers, and used to make toys for the children with coco-nuts or straw: he knew all about country things, and taught the farmers to make the best of their land. He was wonderfully good at shooting, but he never shot a harmless animal.

Although Monsieur Madeleine was rich and good, he did not seem to be happy. He was to be seen at funerals far oftener than at weddings; he was always ready to visit people when they were in trouble of any sort, but not when they were feasting; he did good as secretly

as he could. One day a certain poor man went out and locked up his one miserable room—when he came back he found it had been broken into. He burst into exclamations of horror, but when he came to look round he found nothing gone, and a bright piece of gold shining on the poor table. The burglar had been Monsieur Madeleine. The result of all this was that a story went about that his room was like a hermit's cell, with no furniture but some skulls and cross-bones! Some young ladies who were very curious once went to him and said: “Do show us your room, Monsieur Madeleine, they say it's quite a grotto.” He smiled and showed them in at once. It was a very ordinary room with cheap furniture; there was nothing to notice in it except perhaps two candlesticks which the ladies said must be silver, for they had the hall-mark on them. They went out feeling very silly.

In 1821 the good Bishop of D—— died, and Monsieur Madeleine put on mourning. This was noticed, and it made some people think more of him, for they thought he must be related to the Bishop. Soon after he was made mayor of M——; he had refused the year before, but when he found how much the people wanted him, and considered how much good he might do, he gave in. Now he was at the height of his popularity, and perhaps in all that town there were not more than three persons who did not love and respect him. I will explain who these were.

One was an old man named Fauchelevent; he had had a jet factory when Monsieur Madeleine first came to the town, but as he would persist in going on with the old process his business kept going down, till at last he had to give it up, and now lived in a very poor way by the trade of a carrier. He hated Monsieur Madeleine, because he considered him the cause of all his troubles.

The second enemy was a young woman whose history had been very sad. She used to live in Paris, but her husband had deserted her, and at the age of twenty she found herself obliged to earn her own living and that of her little girl, two years old. She had been born in M—— so she thought she would make her way back there, where she might find some old friends; but it was very difficult travelling with the child, so, though it nearly broke her heart, she agreed to leave her with a man and his wife named Thénardier, who had two little girls of their own, and who lived a little way out of Paris. Fantine, as the poor woman was called, saw how good the Thénardiers were to their own children, and thought they would be kind to her little Cosette, and she agreed to pay them a fair sum every week for the child's board; but they were bad people, and ill-treated the poor little child, and as she grew older they kept demanding more money from the mother, saying that Cosette cost them more now. Now Fantine, when she came to M——, found that all the people she had known were dead or gone away; but she had no difficulty in getting work at the jet factory. So

she always sent the money for her child punctually every month. Fantine was very pretty, with lovely golden hair, an exquisite pink-and-white complexion, and regular white teeth which shone pleasantly when she smiled; this made some of the other factory-girls jealous, so that at last they got up stories against her, and told the lady-superintendent that she did not do her work properly, so that one day, to her horror, Fantine found herself dismissed. She thought it must be by Monsieur Madeleine's order, but really he knew nothing about it. Now Fantine found it very difficult to live. She took one room and tried to make a living by sewing shirts for the soldiers, but she could only earn sixpence a day, and the Thénardiers charged fivepence a day for her child. She found she could not always send them the money. Then they wrote and said that Cosette wanted a woollen petticoat, for she was shivering with cold. Fantine was shivering with cold too, but she thought of something to do. She went to a hairdresser and sold him her beautiful golden hair, which he cropped quite short, and with the money she got a nice warm petticoat and sent it to the Thénardiers. They were furious; they wanted the money, not the petticoat. However, they gave it to their eldest girl.

What with cold and worry and overwork, Fantine began to lose her health. She always had a little dry cough, and a pain in her back, between the shoulders. How she longed for her child! But she owed money to the Thénardiers, and besides, there was the expense of the journey.

She began to hate everybody in her misery, especially Monsieur Madeleine, who had begun it all, as she thought. The Thénardiers wrote again saying that Cosette was sick of a fever which was about in their country. It required very expensive medicine, which they could not afford to give her. If they did not receive two pounds within a week, the child would be dead. Fantine was in despair; but that day, as she was going through the town, she saw a travelling dentist on a cart making a speech to the people. He was boasting of his wonderful skill in fitting false teeth. Suddenly he called out to Fantine: "What beautiful teeth you have! I would give you two pounds for your two front teeth! If you come to me this evening I will take them out." Fantine shuddered, but all day she thought it over, and in the evening she went to the dentist, and came back with two sovereigns, a bleeding mouth, and a great hole where her front teeth were. She sent the money to the Thénardiers, who spent it on themselves; Cosette had not had the fever at all.

Monsieur Madeleine's third enemy was a policeman named Javert. He was not an ordinary policeman, but an inspector, and a very remarkable man. He reminded one of a bulldog, with his short nose, wide nostrils, strong jaw, and stern, even ferocious expression. He gave himself up entirely to his duty, and thought of the world as being composed of two kinds of people, respectable people and criminals. His duty was to bring the criminals to justice, and his only pleasure was in performing this duty success-

fully; certainly he was very clever in remembering faces, and tracking suspected persons, and we all enjoy doing anything we can do very well.

Now Javert had a feeling that there was something wrong about Monsieur Madeleine. It is true he was bound to respect him as mayor of the town, but the inspector considered him a great deal too indulgent to people who were led into evil through poverty or weakness. And besides, Javert was made very uncomfortable by fancying that he saw a resemblance between this rich and respectable gentleman and a convict whom he had once seen at the galleys, named Jean Valjean. This man had been set free at the end of his time, but, having since that committed a theft, he ought, according to the law, to be taken back for life, if he could be found.

One day a great crowd was collected in a street in M——. A horse had fallen down and overturned the cart, and the driver was under it. This was the carrier, old Fauchelevent, the mayor's first enemy. The people had managed to get away the horse, but they could not lift the cart, and all looked to M. Madeleine as he came up. Javert was there too, and had sent some of the bystanders to fetch an iron bar to help lift the cart. Poor old Fauchelevent could just cry out:

“Who will be a kind fellow, and help an old man?”

“Is there a bar?” said M. Madeleine.

“They've gone to get one,” answered a peasant.

“How long will it be?”

"They can't get to the blacksmith's and back under a quarter of an hour."

"It's impossible to wait a quarter of an hour!"

"We must!"

"But don't you see the cart is sinking in the mud? See, there's just room for a man to slip under and lift it with his back. Who has a strong back and a good heart, and would like to earn five pounds?" cried M. Madeleine.

No one moved

"Ten pounds!—twenty pounds!"

"It isn't goodwill that is wanting," said a voice near the mayor. He turned and saw Javert, who continued:

"I have only known one man, Mr. Mayor, who could do what you suggest." The mayor shivered. Javert went on: "A convict."

"Ah!" said Madeleine.

"At the galleys at Toulon." Madeleine turned pale.

Meanwhile the cart sank slowly lower. Fauchelevent gasped and cried:

"I'm suffocated! It's breaking my ribs! Lift it! Lift it!"

Madeleine looked at the policeman, then at the staring, helpless people, and then smiled sadly, and at once slipped under the cart. Twice he tried to lift it, without success, and the people cried to him that he would only be crushed too, but, with a mighty effort, he arched his back, and the cart rose. Then all the people ran and steadied it, and drew out old Fauchelevent. In another

minute M. Madeleine stood up; his face was pale and perspiring, his coat was torn and muddy, but, as the old man clasped and kissed his knees, the mayor smiled with an expression of happy and heavenly suffering, as he quietly looked at Javert, whose piercing gaze was fixed upon him.

Fauchelevent was much injured, but he recovered in M. Madeleine's hospital, only one leg always remained stiff, so that he was lame. M. Madeleine got him a place as gardener to some nuns in Paris who kept a girls' school.

Soon after this Fantine was out one night trying to find work—but no one would have her, for she was really ill, and not fit to work—when a rude man, who would have called himself a gentleman and ought to have known better, came up behind her and thrust a great handful of snow down her neck, for it was in the depth of winter. He had been laughing at her before, because she had lost her teeth, and calling her ugly, and she had taken no notice, hoping he would go away; but now the pain which the cold snow caused her was so unbearable that she lost her temper, and, flying at the man, tore off his hat and trampled on it. At this moment up came Javert, and at once took the woman into custody, for he did not see what went before, and never thought the well-dressed *gentleman* could be in fault. When Fantine was at the police-station she was told that she would have to go to prison for six months. She went down on her knees to Javert, crying:

‘ But what will become of Cosette? My little girl!

But I owe four pounds to the Thénardiers, Mr. Inspector!"

"Six months, I tell you," said Javert severely.

"I implore you to pardon me," said the poor woman. "Indeed, I did not begin the trouble. That gentleman put the snow down my neck, and it hurt so, for I am not very well. And he had said unkind things to me before. But perhaps I was wrong to be angry. I would beg his pardon if he was here; do forgive me just this once. My little Cosette is such a little angel, and if I do not pay the money, perhaps the Thénardiers will turn her out of doors, and it is cold, and she is a little one that cannot manage for herself." And Fantine kissed the policeman's hand.

"Now," said Javert, "I have listened to you. You will have your six months. No one in the world can let you off."

As the officers seized hold of Fantine, a voice said: "Stop a minute." It was M. Madeleine. Javert took off his hat with an awkward bow, and began:

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Mayor——" when Fantine broke in:

"So you are the mayor, whom I hate!" and struck him in the face.

M. Madeleine said to Javert:

"Inspector, be good enough to set this woman free."

Javert and Fantine were both thunderstruck, but the mayor spoke with authority, and soon after the poor woman was being tended with care in M. Madeleine's hospital, and thus a second enemy was turned into a friend.

THE STRANGE TRIAL

One day M. Madeleine, mayor of M——, was informed that a policeman wished to see him—Inspector Javert. “ Show him in,” said the mayor. He was writing, and did not at once turn round as Javert entered. Presently he turned and saw Javert standing with a quiet, humble expression, and yet he looked as if he had been having a great struggle with himself, and had made up his mind to do something very difficult.

“ What is it?” asked M. Madeleine.

“ I have come to report a wrong-doing to you.”

“ What wrong-doing?”

“ An inferior officer has been seriously wanting in respect to a superior.”

“ Who is the culprit?”

“ Myself.”

“ And who is the superior?”

“ You, Mr. Mayor.” M. Madeleine gazed at him in surprise.

“ I beg you to dismiss me from my office. I am no longer worthy to hold it.”

“ But what have you done?”

“ After the scene with that woman the other day, I denounced you to the chief of the police.”

M. Madeleine laughed. "What, as a mayor who interferes with policemen?"

"No, as an escaped convict." The mayor became deadly pale. Javert continued. "For a long time I had noticed your resemblance to a certain Jean Valjean" (the mayor shivered, but Javert's eyes were on the ground) "and then I saw you lift that cart, and altogether——"

"Well," said M. Madcleine calmly, "what did they say to you?"

"That I must be wrong, for the real Jean Valjean has been caught."

A long "Ah!" escaped from the mayor.

"It's an old man who calls himself Champmathieu. He was taken up for stealing apples—was caught with the branch of the apple-tree in his hand. In the prison to which he was sent was a convict named Brcvet, who recognized him as Jean Valjean. Two other convicts were sent for, and they said the same thing. So, when I denounced you, sir, they told me to come to Paris, and see the man for myself. I did, and——"

"What did you think?" asked M. Madeleine.

"Oh, there is no doubt; I recognized him too."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite sure; indeed I cannot now imagine how I could have had my other idea."

"What will happen to this man, and how does he take it?"

"He will have to go back to the galleys for life. As to

how he takes it, he pretends to be stupid, and not understand. He only says he is not the man. But it's proved."

"When is the trial?"

"To-morrow; I go by the coach to-night."

"Where?"

"At Arras."

"Then good afternoon."

"But I ought to be dismissed."

"Well, I'll see about that."

When Javert had left him, the mayor went first to see poor Fantine, who was very ill indeed, and kept crying for her child; then he ordered a light carriage and good horse to be at his door at five o'clock the next morning.

You will have guessed that M. Madeleine *was* Jean Valjean. All that night he spent in the most frightful struggle with himself, for he could not bear to let an innocent man suffer, and yet it seemed so awful to have to go back to the galleys after all these long years of good and useful life. He was terribly tempted; for so long he had lived in terror of hearing the name Jean Valjean, and now, if he were only silent, he need never fear again, and could carry on all the good works he had begun, in peace and contentment. He even said to himself (or rather the devil said to him) that it would be wrong to interfere with the evident designs of Providence. Immediately, however, he turned with disgust from the evil thought. He considered what was his chief aim in life now. Was it not to turn his back on his sin, rather than on its conse-

quences? And to be silent now would be a worse sin than ever he had committed before. He felt as if he were in the presence of the good Bishop of D——, to whom he owed his conversion, and he became calm.

Twelve o'clock struck; his head was burning, and he opened the window and looked out into the clear, cold night. Suddenly he thought of Fantine.

"I have thought only of myself!" he cried. "Here there are work-people, men and women, depending upon me; if I leave them they will be ruined, poor Fantine will die, her child will die, too, from neglect, and I shall have sacrificed all these poor people for the sake of saving this one man, Champmathieu."

This argument seemed so good that if Jean Valjean had not been as strong in soul as in body he might have been overcome by it, but in the end his better self was victor, and when the little carriage appeared in the grey morning he got into it and drove away towards Arras, without letting anyone know where he was going.

It was a long way, and one horse could not do the whole distance, so half-way there he had to change; then a wheel came off the carriage, and he had to find an inn where there was another carriage to be had. It really seemed as if it would be impossible to be at the trial.

By the time M. Madeleine arrived at Arras it was eight o'clock at night. He drove to an inn and asked the ostler whether the horse would be fit to start again next morning.

"Certainly not," said the man.

"Then I want to take a place in the coach for M——; at what time does it start?"

"At one o'clock in the morning, sir; and now will you come to bed?"

"No." said the weary man, who had been travelling all day, "but I will be in time for the coach. Tell me the way to the law-court."

"It's very late for the trial; they generally finish at six, but I see it's not over yet," and the man pointed to a great building over the way, where the windows were still brightly lighted. M. Madeleine went across, and met a lawyer coming out.

"Is it all over?" he asked the lawyer.

"Yes, it's over," was the brisk answer.

"And the sentence?"

"The galleys for life."

"Then the man was recognized?" (very feebly).

"It's a *woman*, condemned for cruelty to a child. But I suppose you mean the case that's coming on now—an escaped convict taken again. Oh, *he* will be condemned too; a horrible-looking fellow—I should condemn him for his face alone."

"Can one get in?" almost whispered M. Madeleine.

"Well, it's crowded, but you *may* find a place. There's the door," and the lawyer left him.

M. Madeleine wiped his forehead, and went up to the porter at the door.

"Will you let me in, please," he said.

"I have orders not to open the door. The hall is absolutely full," said the porter.

"Is there not a single place?"

"Not one, except a few behind the judge, but no one is allowed in those except persons who have some title or office."

M. Madeleine hesitated and considered for some minutes; the battle that had begun the day before was still going on within him. Then he hastily wrote on a piece of paper: "M. Madeleine, Mayor of M——" and gave the paper to the porter, saying, in a tone of command, "Give that to the judge."

In a few minutes the porter came back to him, bowing, and saying that his lordship would be pleased to see him—for the judge, like many other people, had heard of M. Madeleine. In another minute or two the porter had left him in a little room with a green table and two candles, and he was dimly conscious that the man's last words were:

"Now sir, you have only to open that door, and you will find yourself in the court, behind the judge's chair."

Here the final conflict took place. A man is hardly in the best condition for fighting when he has not slept the night before, has not eaten for twenty-four hours, has been travelling all day and is bruised all over by the jolting; but this man was the bravest of the brave, and he fought his great fight, with the perspiration streaming down his face, and finally, victorious, opened the door and entered the court.

The counsel against the prisoner was speaking. He pointed out that the man had been found with a broken branch of an apple tree in his hand; that he had been recognized by Inspector Javert, and also by three convicts who were present in the court, so that there was no doubt that he was really Jean Valjean, and a danger to society.

Then the counsel for the defence did his best. He observed that because a man was found with a branch in his hand, it did not follow that he had broken it. But he was forced to admit that the evidence as to Champmathieu's being Jean Valjean was very strong, and he was sorry he persisted in denying it. Still if he *was* Jean Valjean, it did not follow that he had stolen the apples; and as to the theft from the Bishop, they were not there to consider that.

The counsel on the other side was, of course, quick to claim that everyone admitted Champmathieu to be Jean Valjean, described his character in the blackest colours, and said that such a man was as certain to be lying about the apples, as about his own name.

Then the judge asked the old man: "Have you anything to say, yourself?"

The prisoner leant forward, and M. Madeleine could see clearly that he was an older-looking man, but otherwise strikingly like himself. His hair was white; M. Madeleine's hair was white too, but he did not know it—it was only half-grey when he had his last interview with Javert, but the last terrible night and day had

whitened it. But the prisoner was different in expression from the mayor, and as the latter looked at him he realized what he himself might have become. He appeared to be utterly stupid and confused, and a degraded kind of being altogether. At first he did not seem to hear what the judge said, and only turned a dirty and ragged cap round in his fingers, but when the question was repeated, he suddenly found his tongue.

"All I've got ter say is this. I was a carter in Paris, with Monsieur Baloup. Woy don't yer ask 'im? It's very 'ard in the winter toime. An' there was moy darter, she used ter wash, an' that's 'ard too. I dono wot else yer want."

The judge reminded the man that search had been made for his former master and for his daughter, but neither could be found. Then he asked him, sternly:

"Prisoner, I ask you once more for your own sake, answer me clearly these questions—did you climb into the orchard and steal the apples? And are you the convict Jean Valjean?"

"Well now, I'll tell yer," replied the poor creature. "I 'aven't stole nothin'. I was goin' along very 'ungry and I saw a branch on the ground and it 'ad apples on it and I jest picked it up. An' I dono wot yer mean about yer Jean Valjean. I'm a pore man; I ain't got no learnin' and I don't understand things. I'm Champmathieu and I ain't never been at the galleys, but I worked for Monsieur Baloup. An' I dono wot you all want with me."

Then the counsel asked the judge to hear openly the evidence of Javert and the three convicts, who had all recognized the man in the prison. The judge pointed out that Javert had been obliged to go back to his work at *N*— after having written down his testimony that the prisoner was certainly Jean Valjean, but he called on the other three to come forward one by one.

The first was called Brevet. On being asked if he still persisted in what he had said, he answered:

"Yes, my lord. This man is Jean Valjean, who was at Toulon from 1796 to 1815. He looks stupider now; that's his age I suppose. At the galleys he used to be cunning. I'm certain it's the same man."

Next came Chenildieu. On having the same question put to him he burst out laughing.

"I should think I *did* know him! I say, old fellow, you've turned sulky!"

Then Cochevaille was called upon. He, like the others, wore the red shirt and green cap which distinguished convicts, and he had a stupid and low countenance.

"Oh yes, it's Jean Valjean," he growled. "They used to call him the crane, because he was so strong."

The judge prepared for the sentence. There was a breathless silence in the court, suddenly broken by a man's voice crying:

"Brevet, Chenildieu, Cochevaille, look at *me*!"

Everyone gazed in the direction of the voice, and saw a man standing behind the judge. He appeared quite

calm, though pale. His hair was white. His coat was buttoned up and there was no sign of disorder in his dress. Many people present knew him, and there was an exclamation of "M. Madeleine!"

"My lord," said M. Madeleine, "this man must be released. I am Jean Valjean."

The judge looked pityingly at him and said loudly:

"Is there a doctor here?"

Everyone understood, including M. Madeleine, who shook his head with a sad smile.

"I am not mad," he said. "Eight years ago I left Toulon. I did rob the Bishop, but he forgave me, and since then I have tried to live differently, in a place where I was not known. Surely you recognize me?" (turning to the convicts).

They shook their heads, but appeared greatly confused. Then he said:

"I wish Javert were here. *He* would know me. Ah, I know *you* well! Brevet, do you remember those chequered braces you used to wear?" Brevet started.

"Chenildieu, your right shoulder is all one great scar, because you tried to burn away the letters branded on it; but they still show. Isn't that true?"

"Yes it is," answered Chenildieu, in sullen surprise.

"Cochepaille, you have a date tattooed on your arm. It is March 1st, 1815, the day when the Emperor embarked at Cannes. Pull up your sleeve."

The man did so. Those who were near saw the date.

M. Madeleine turned to the judge with a smile of triumph and despair.

"You see I am really Jean Valjean."

There was silence. All was clear, and yet no one seemed to think it his duty to do anything.

"I will go," said Jean Valjean, "as you do not arrest me. You know where I live; I have a few things still to do."

He walked to the door, everyone making way for him. Someone opened the door. As he was passing out he turned and said to the people:

"You are sorry for me, are you not? But when I think that I was tempted not to do it, I am only thankful. And yet I would rather that all this had not happened."

Fantine had grown rapidly worse. When she found M. Madeleine was away it occurred to her that he had gone to fetch her child, and the nurses thought it best not to contradict this, especially as they did not know where he really was. The morning after the trial he appeared at his usual hour. Fantine looked at him without surprise and said: "I have been dreaming of you all night. You had a glory round your head, and there were angels with you. But where is Cosette? You might have brought her in to see me."

The doctor hastily interrupted, saying the child was outside. Fantine smiled joyfully and took M. Madeleine's hand; but suddenly her face became frozen with horror,

her breath stopped, and her eyes were glazed. Her benefactor laid her back on the pillow—dead. Then he turned and saw Javert standing in the doorway. “I am ready for you,” said Jean Valjean.

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The galleys at Toulon were a dreary sight. There the wretched convicts, chained in pairs by the leg, worked at loading and unloading ships and other hard tasks under the blazing sun, watched by men with loaded guns, ready to shoot them if they tried to escape.

One morning there was a sudden excitement on board one of the ships; a sailor had fallen overboard, and, like many other sailors, he could not swim. No one at first seemed inclined to go after him, for the tide was ebbing strongly and the boats were being tossed about by the swell; but one of the convicts cried to the overseer: “*Let me go in!*”

His chain was quickly removed, he dived in, and after a minute’s suspense he was seen again with one arm round the sailor; a rope was thrown, which the convict secured round the half-drowned man, and he was drawn up by many arms into the ship. But the convict seemed exhausted by his noble effort; immediately after saving the other, he sank like lead and appeared no more!

We who know Jean Valjean are not, however, so ready as the spectators were to believe him dead; there is such a thing as *swimming under water*, and it may be we shall meet him again!

COSETTE

Cosette was a very miserable little girl. When she was hardly three years old she had been left by Fantine, her mother, with an innkeeper and his wife of the name of Thénardier, who lived in the village of Montfermeil, not very far from Paris. It was not that Cosette's mother did not love her, but she was very poor and was looking out for work, and she thought she could not manage to keep Cosette with her. And as the Thénardiers had two little girls of their own, who were fat and rosy and happy-looking, she thought they must be kind people, and would be good to her little one. So, with many kisses and tears, she departed, and used to send money to the Thénardiers every month to pay them for keeping Cosette. But after about four years the mother fell ill and died, and after that, of course, the Thénardiers received no more money for Cosette. They still kept her, however, for she was very useful to them, and the treatment she received from them could not be much worse than it had always been; for while her poor mother was starving herself in order to send money to keep her child well fed and clothed, little Cosette was dressed in rags, had hardly anything to eat, and was made to do hard and heavy work, and beaten for

the least thing. Meanwhile, as the Thénardiers were pretty well off, their own little girls, Eponine and Azelma, were warmly and prettily dressed, had plenty of good food, and did nothing but amuse themselves all day.

The thing that Cosette minded most was going to fetch water. Montfermeil was badly off for water; it had all to be brought from a spring in the wood, some way from the village. A man used to come round with it every day, but he only worked till seven o'clock in the evening in summer and five in winter, so if any water was wanted after that time, people had to fetch it for themselves. Now Cosette was very much afraid of the dark, so she always took care there should be enough water in the house before night; for, if not, she would certainly be sent for it, as she did all the work of a servant.

One Christmas Eve things were very lively at Montfermeil. There were the vans of a travelling show at one end of the village, and all the shops were bright, as shops are at Christmas-time. There was a toy-shop opposite to the Thénardiers' inn, and in the centre of the window there was displayed a magnificent doll, which Cosette called "the lady". She was nearly as big as a baby, and wore a lovely white muslin dress and pink ribbons, lace frills round her neck and sleeves and the bottom of her skirt, and gold pins in her hair. It was *real* hair too, of a golden colour, and of course she had an exquisite pink-and-white complexion, and bright blue

eyes. Eponine and Azelma admired the doll very much, and even Cosette had snatched a great many glimpses of it during the day; but there in the window it stayed, for no one in Montfermeil was rich enough to buy such a grand doll.

There were a good many people at the inn that night, mostly wagoners; consequently more water had been used than usual, and there was none left, but Cosette did not think any more would be wanted. Presently one of the wagoners came in from the stable and said:

“ My horse has not had any water.”

Cosette darted out from the place under the table where she always sat.

“ Oh! yes sir, he has had plenty of water,” she said. “ I gave it him.” This was not true; she was so terrified of having to fetch water.

“ I know he has not drunk,” said the wagoner angrily. “ He has a way of snorting when he is thirsty, which I know well. Come, let him have some water, and make an end of it.”

“ Do you hear? Go and give the horse water,” said Madame Thénardier.

“ But ma’am,” said Cosette feebly, “ there is no more water.”

“ Well then, Miss Dog-without-a-name, go and fetch some!” and Madame Thénardier threw open the house door.

Cosette’s head drooped and she went to a corner and

fetehed a pail so large that she could have sat in it comfortably. Madame Thénardier addcd:

“ And as you *are* going out, Miss Toad, you can take this sixpence and get a large loaf from the baker’s.”

Cosette put the sixpenee in her apron pocket, and stood for a moment, as if she expeeted someone to come to her rescue.

“ Get on with you!” cried Madame Thénardier, pushed her out and shut the door on her.

Cosette cast one look at the bright toy-shop with “ the lady ” in the window, and then walked through the village as fast as she could. When she got beyond the shops, and there was only a light from a window now and then, she rattled the handle of the pail to keep up her courage. But when she reached the last house she stopped; it seemed *impossible* to go farther. She gazed with despair into the darkness which lay before her; there were no people there, but there were beasts—perhaps there were ghosts! Now she distinctly heard the beasts trampling the grass, and saw the ghosts flitting between the trees. She seized the pail and turned back into the village. “ I shall say there was no water,” she thought. But before she had taken many steps Cosette stopped again. Now, it was Madame Thénardier whom she seemed to see—Madame Thénardier, tall and strong and red and ugly, with anger flaming in her eyes. This was worse than even ghosts, and Cosette turned round once more, and ran as fast as she could along the road and into the wood,

trembling and half-crying, not daring to look aside, for fear of the things which might be lurking between the trees, until she came to the spring.:

It was pitch dark here, but the child knew the place well. She felt with her hand for a young tree which bent over the basin, and holding it with the left hand she plunged the pail in with the right. She was so excited that she had three times her ordinary strength. As she bent over the sixpence was jerked out of her apron into the spring, but she did not notice it. Then the terror of the darkness overwhelmed her, and she prepared to run home as fast as possible; but there was the pail! She took the handle with both hands and staggered along a dozen steps; then she put it down for a moment. But the terror made her pick it up and go forward again, and so the poor little girl slowly advanced, spilling the ice-cold water over her bare legs, and shaken all over with the gasping sobs forced from her by cold, weariness, and fright. Suddenly the pail weighed nothing at all. Someone had taken it by the handle.

Coseite looked up; a man had come up beside her. They were leaving the wood now, and she could just see his face, and that he was poorly dressed. Strange to say, she was not afraid. The man took the pail and walked by her side and began asking her questions.

“ How old are you, little one?”

“ Eight years old, sir.”

“ Where have you come from with that water?”

“ From the spring in the wood.”

“ And how far have you still to go?”

“ A quarter of an hour’s walk.”

“ Have you no mother then?”

“ I don’t think so. The others have. No, I haven’t any.”

And after a pause Cosette added:

“ I don’t think I ever had one.”

The man stopped, put down the pail and turned Cosette’s face up to him.

“ What is your name?” he said.

“ Cosette.”

The man started. In fact, though he did not yet tell the child, he had known her mother, and promised her on her death-bed that he would seek out and take care of her little child, and it was for that very reason that he was coming to Montfermeil. He was really rich, but had his reasons for wishing to appear poor. His name was Jean Valjean, but he had at one time been called Monsieur Madeleine. The two went on again together, and presently the man said:

“ Who sent you for the water?”

“ Madame Thénardier, my mistress; she keeps the inn.”

“ I will come to your inn to-night.”

Nothing more was said till they were close to the inn. Then Cosette whispered timidly.

“ May I take the pail now, sir?”

“ Why should you?” said her friend.

"Because Madame Thénardier would be angry if she knew I had not carried it myself."

The man handed her the pail and knocked at the door. Madame Thénardier opened it, and seeing Cosette first, cried:

"Well, here you are, you little wretch! You have been a fine time about it!"

"Please ma'am," said Cosette trembling, "here is a gentleman who wants a bed."

Madame Thénardier changed her tone entirely.

"Do come in, sir," she said. The man came in and seated himself at a table, and asked for bread and cheese, which Madame Thénardier brought; while he was eating it he watched Cosette, who had hastily gone to her place under the table.

Cosette was ugly. If she had been happy and well-treated she might have been pretty, but as things were she was certainly ugly. She was thin and pale, and seemed six years old rather than eight. Her great eyes were red and dim with crying. The corners of her mouth were drawn down with a constant expression of misery. Her hands were red and covered with chilblains. The firelight showed her bones coming through her ragged cotton clothes, and the man could see blue marks of bruises on her bare legs and shoulders. Suddenly Madame Thénardier cried:

"Well, where's the loaf?"

Cosette had forgotten it. The treatment she had

undergone had taught her to lie. She said: "Please ma'am, the baker's was shut."

" You should have knocked."

" I did knock, please ma'am, but nobody came."

" Well then, give me the money back," growled Madame Thénardier. Cosette felt in her apron pocket. The sixpence was gone. She said nothing, but shrank backwards.

" Well, have you lost it, or stolen it?" shouted the angry woman, at the same time going to a whip which hung on the wall.

" Oh, please, ma'am, *please!*" cried Cosette in anguish. " I'll never do it again!"

Madame Thénardier took down the whip.

At this moment the man stooped down to the floor and picked up a sixpence, which indeed he had quietly put there a moment before.

" I think this must have fallen out of the child's pocket," he said, handing it to Madame Thénardier. So Cosette escaped for that once, and began to feel as if the man must be a sort of angel. .

Then Eponine and Azelma came in, bright and pretty and well-dressed. Their mother took them on her knee and kissed them and smoothed their hair, and then the little girls began playing together, at first with a doll, but as it was old and ragged they soon got tired of it and threw it on the ground, and Eponine began to dress up the kitten in some bits of stuff. They took no notice whatever of Cosette; they never thought of her as a little girl like

themselves, and yet Eponine was about the same age, and Azelma rather younger.

“ See, Azelma,” said Eponine, “ this doll is much neier than the other because it moves and cries. I’m pretending I’m a lady, and this is my little girl, and I bring her to see you, and you look at her. Presently you see her whiskers and you are surprised. Then you see her ears and her tail, and you are *very* surprised. So you say: ‘ Dear nie! ’ and I say to you: ‘ Yes, madame, that’s my little girl. That’s what little girls are like now.’ ”

While the children were chattering, Cosette had crept for a moment out of her place and seized the neglected doll, and now she was quite happy clasping it in her arms and rocking it to sleep. She had never in her life had a doll of her own, only sometimes she would tie up a rag and pretend it was a doll. She thought she was sitting quite in the shadow, but suddenly Azelma saw her, and gave Eponine a nudge. Then both the children ran to their mother in horror.

“ Mother, mother,” they cried, “ look there!”

Cosette was in perfect bliss and heard nothing. When Madame Thénardier saw that she was actually daring to nurse “ the young ladies’ ” doll, she sprang towards her like a tiger.

“ Cosette!” she cried, in a hoarse voice. Cosette started up, laid the doll gently on the floor, joined her hands and burst into tears.

"What is the matter?" said the traveller to the woman.

"Can't you see?" she answered, pointing to the doll.

"Well, why mayn't she play with it?" said the man.

"*She* play with it!" cried the woman furiously; "*she* touch it with her ugly, dirty hands!"

The man said no more, but went straight out of the house, while the angry woman gave Cosette a great kick under the table, which changed her sobs into screams. In a few moments the door opened again and the traveller returned, carrying the splendid doll from the shop opposite. He stood it on the floor before Cosette and said:

"Here, this is for you."

Cosette seemed dazzled. She stepped backwards to the wall and almost stopped breathing; everyone else gazed in surprise. The innkeeper, who was in the room, whispered to his wife: "That doll must have cost more than a sovereign. The man must be rich; mind you are polite to him."

"Well, Cosette," said Madame Thénardier, in a voice which she *could* not make pleasant, however hard she tried, "why don't you take your doll?"

Cosette came forward a few steps. Her eyes began to gleam through her tears.

"May I, ma'am?" she said.

"Yes, of course," said the woman; "it's yours, as the gentleman gives it you."

"Really, sir?" repeated the child timidly. The man

could not speak for pity. He put "the lady" into her arms.

Cosette stood still for a moment, and then said:

"I shall call her Catherinc."

Then she put her doll on a chair and gazed at her, and Eponine and Azelma for once envied Cosette. But the sight of her happiness annoyed Madame Thénardier so much that she soon sent the children to bed. I need not tell you that "the lady" went with Cosette.

After a time the inn emptied for the night; our traveller, Jean Valjean, stayed up late thinking, but at last he asked to be shown his room and was taken by the innkeeper to the best room in the house.

The French children do not hang up their stockings on Christmas Eve, but they put one of their shoes on the hearth, and Santa Claus comes down the chimney and puts something into them. Eponine and Azelma put their pretty little shoes ready, when they went to bed, and even poor little Cosette, though Santa Claus had never brought her anything, thought she would trust him once again; so she put her ugly little worn-out wooden shoe, muddy and broken as it was, on the other side of the fireplace. When she got up on the dark Christmas morning, she saw something gleaming in the wooden shoe. It was a sovereign! She did not know what it was, but she put it in her apron pocket, and kept gazing at it every now and then while she swept the house. Eponine and Azelma found sixpences in their shoes when they got up much later.

Then Jean Valjean had a long talk with the innkeeper, and told him why he had come there, showing him a letter from the child's mother. Monsieur Thénardier made him out a long bill for pretended expenses, but when this was paid he could no longer refuse to give up Cosette to him. Jean Valjean had brought her a little frock and underclothes, and when she had put these on he took her hand, and led her away for ever from the house where she had suffered so much. Henceforth until his death Cosette always had a loving protector.

THE ESCAPE

Cosette's troubles were by no means over from the time that she walked away, holding the hand of Jean Valjean; but she never again felt that there was no one to love her. She was too young, and trusted her protector too utterly, to be surprised when he took her to live in a very poor lodging in a part of the outskirts of Paris where the houses were all small and wretched. We know that his great object was to escape the notice of the police, because, though he had long since repented and was a very good man, still, as he had escaped from the galleys he might at any moment be arrested and taken back there for good—and then, what would become of Cosette? So he lived very quietly and hoped that no one would take any notice of him. But there was a police inspector named Javert who knew him by sight, and who had long ago made up his mind that he would earn great fame and a reward by hunting and catching the celebrated convict. It is true that Jean was generally supposed to be dead, but Javert had heard and seen things that made him suspicious, and this may account for the fact that one night, as Jean Valjean was putting a piece of money into the hand of an old beggar whom he knew, standing by a

street lamp, a glance from the beggar's eyes terrified him, for they seemed to be those, not of his old friend, but of—Javert!

Perhaps Jean should have left the house that night, but he could not believe that what he had seen was anything more than fancy. Still he felt uneasy, and when the next day his landlady told him there was a new lodger, he watched through his own keyhole as the man went up the stairs to another room; this time there was no doubt about it—it was the terrible Javert!

Jean dressed Cosette and tied up his money; in doing so he let a piece fall on the floor. This annoyed him, but he hoped no one had heard, and as it was now getting dark, he took Cosette by the hand, and together they slipped downstairs and into the street. It seemed quite deserted—it is true, however, there were trees in it!

Jean began at once to walk in a way which would make him very difficult to follow, if anyone were trying to do so. He took a great many turnings, always choosing the smaller and darker streets, sometimes coming right back on his own steps, which is a thing a hunted stag will do to confuse the hounds. Cosette asked no questions, but held his hand and trotted along contentedly. At last Jean decided that if there *had* been any pursuers they must have completely lost sight of him by now, and he began to look about for a new lodging. At that moment he saw three men pass, one after the other, under a lantern in the street which he was just leaving. The lantern hung from

a police-station, and as the first man passed under it Jean could not be mistaken in the eagle eyes and nose and the tight-pressed lips of his enemy. A fourth man joined the three first, and they all stood at a crossing and seemed to consult. Evidently they could not see the man and child, who were in the shadow at that moment, and Jean Valjean took advantage of their hesitation to run off as quickly as possible along a narrow street, carrying Cosette who was getting tired. At last he reached a bridge over the River Seine, where there was a toll to pay; he offered a halfpenny, but the toll-keeper said it was a penny, for the child could walk. Jean was vexed that he had drawn attention to himself and the child, but he was pleased to see that a cart was crossing the bridge, so that he was able to walk in its shadow.

On the other side he drew breath. He saw before him a number of little alleys, but there was a bright open space to be crossed to get to them. Still he was not afraid now; he could not be in sight of his pursuers. He calmly walked to a narrow alley—and just as he was entering it saw four dark figures appear at the farther end of the bridge!

Presently the road forked like the letter Y. Was he to take right or left? He decided on the right, because that way led more towards the country. Every now and then he turned round and looked and listened. The third time he did so he seemed to see a shadow far away behind him. Then he fled along as fast as he could, until the road ended in a wall!

Now this doesn't mean that it was impossible to go any farther, only the road was T-shaped, and he must turn either to right or left; he looked to the right—it was a short road and ended in a blank wall; to the left—and there stood a shadow guarding it. This was a policeman who had been sent round another way by Javert; the inspector himself, with seven or eight soldiers armed with bayonets, was now to be heard coming up the long road towards them.

Jean looked again along the road to the right. The wall at the end was three times the height of a man, and a lime-tree was growing behind it; a house could be seen, but not clearly. Now convicts learn to perform very remarkable feats, and Jean Valjean did not doubt that, if he had been alone, he would have been able to get up the wall in a peculiar manner of his own; but what about Cosette? His eye fell on a lantern which hung from a rope across the street, for this was before the time of gas. Fortunately the lamp had gone out, so Jean was able to cut the rope with his knife and put the lantern quietly down without its being perceived. Then he put the end of the rope round Cosette's waist, but she began to whimper and say: "Father, I'm so frightened; I can hear somebody coming!"

"Hush, darling, be silent. It's Madame Thénardier, and if you make a sound she'll get you." At this the poor child became perfectly quiet, and did exactly as she was told. Jean Valjean took her to the corner where two

walls met, removed his shoes and threw them over the wall, stood with his back to the corner and climbed up by sticking his elbows and heels into all the little cracks he could find. Of course, it is *very* difficult to do, but Jean Valjean could do even more wonderful things than that.

When he was at the top he sat on the wall and called down gently to Cosette:

"Stand in the corner. Now—not a sound!" and she felt herself lifted up to his side. There was a building against the wall on the inside, with a sloping roof. Jean took Cosette on his back, holding both her hands in his, and descended this roof till he came to the tree. At this moment the soldiers arrived at the end of the long road with a great clatter, and he heard Javert shout:

"To the right! Examine the blind alley! The other road is guarded!"

Then he slipped down the tree-trunk with the child, and found himself in a garden, close to the outhouse, and at some distance from the great house itself. He slipped into the outhouse with Cosette, and there they crouched trembling, till the noise of the soldiers passed away. How peaceful everything seemed now! Suddenly they heard a sound, but this time it was the lovely soothing music of a hymn which came to them through the darkness. The man and the child, the penitent and the innocent, fell upon their knees.

The night wore on, and Cosette was very cold; Jean

went out of the outhouse softly, leaving her half asleep, and looked about and listened. He seemed to hear a faint noise like that of the little bells the sheep and goats wear in mountainous countries. He gazed in the direction of the sound, and could just distinguish an object which appeared to be a lame man, limping along some way off. The bell seemed to belong to him, for it tinkled when he moved. Jean, always in terror of betrayal, came back to Cosette and laid her down in a darker corner of the hut. As he touched her hands he noticed that they were icy; he called softly in her ear, "Cosette!" There was no answer nor movement—was she dead? No, he could just feel her breath, and her heart faintly beating, but she must have a fire and a bed in a quarter of an hour's time, or her feeble life would flicker out. He left the outhouse again and walked straight up to the figure with the bell, crying: "Here's five pounds for you!" and holding out the money.

"Five pounds!" exclaimed the astonished man.

"Five pounds, if you will give me shelter for to-night."

"Why," cried the other, "it's M. Madeleine!"

Jean started; he could not distinguish the features of the man, who went on:

"How *did* you get in, M. Madeleine? Have you fallen from heaven? But indeed I might expect you to come from there. Only you look so strange—no hat or coat! Do you know I should have been quite frightened

If I hadn't known you! However did you get in?"

"Who are you? And what is this house?"

"Why, don't you remember? It was you who got me the place!"

"No, I don't remember. And how do you remember me?"

"Because you saved my life."

Just then the moon came from behind a cloud, and Jean saw that the man before him was old Fauchelevant whom he had saved from being crushed by a cart. He found out from him that the great house was a convent inhabited by nuns who kept a girls' school, and he then remembered that when he was Mayor of M—— he had obtained for Fauchelevant the post of gardener here. The nuns were very strict about not allowing any men inside the house or grounds except this lame old gardener, and even he had to wear a bell on his leg to warn them to keep out of his way. He also explained that he had come out to cover the melons, as he had awokened in the night, and thought there would be a frost.

Then Jean spoke to him very seriously.

"I saved your life once."

"I know you did. I remembered it first."

"Now you can save mine."

The old man seized the great strong hands in his trembling grasp and cried:

"O! what a blessed chance! Only tell me what I am to do."

"Have you a room?"

"I've a sort of hut over there, behind the ruins of the old convent. It has three rooms."

This hut was in a very secluded part of the garden, and hidden by the ruins.

"Good," said Jean. "Now for the child."

"Oh," murmured Fauchelevent, "there's a *child*!"

He asked no questions, however, and followed Jean Valjean like a dog. Less than half an hour after, Cosette was snugly asleep in the gardener's bed before a good fire, and the two men sat and warmed themselves, and ate a little bread and cheese. Then they lay down on some straw, but neither slept, for they were full of their thoughts.

Jean Valjean was thinking that if he could only stay here it would really be the best thing possible, for as no men but the gardener were allowed in the place, nobody would think of looking for him there. Fauchelevent on his side was very much puzzled; he had heard nothing of M. Madeleine since leaving M—— and he could not think what trouble he could have got into, unless he had been plotting against the Government! And then it was so curious that he should have a child with him. "However," was his final thought, "M. Madeleine didn't *consider* so much before going under the cart to save me; I will do all I can for him."

Next morning a bell was heard tolling in the convent, and Fauchelevent told Jean that it must be for one of

the nuns, who had been very ill, and must have died. Then there was another bell ringing in a particular way, which the gardener explained as summoning the nuns to a council; and while it went on he and Jean discussed what they were to do next. " Cannot I stay here?" said Jean.

" Well," said Fauchelevant, who really had a good deal of cunning, " I think I could manage to get leave for you, if only you could get *out*. You see, *I know* you, and it's enough for me to say you dropped down from heaven; but the nuns have a kind of idea that people ought to come in by the *door*. It's all right about the *child*; I can take her out in the wheel-barrow, covered up with grass, and take her to a fruit-woman I know, who will keep her a day or two if I say she's my niece, and then she can come back and be in the school here if you like; but as to *you*—"

At this moment three quick strokes of the bell were heard, and the gardener hastily buckled on his bell, and saying " That's for me ", hobbled off to the convent.

He found the Prioress, as the head of the convent was called, awaiting him. She told him that one of the nuns had died early that morning, and that they were very anxious to bury her in the vault under the chapel. Until lately this had been the custom, but now the Government had passed a law that everyone must be buried in the cemetery, and next day they would send a coffin and a hearse to convey the body away. Now the Prioress

wanted to deceive the Government and bury the nun in the vault, but she could not carry this out without a man's help in raising a heavy stone slab in the chapel, and lowering the body into the vault, and also in fastening up the other coffin. Fauchelevent promised to do all that was necessary, but he said:

“ The men that carry away the coffin will feel how light it is; I must get some earth to make it heavy.” Then the Prioress thanked him most heartily, and begged him to keep the matter secret, which he promised to do, and then he said very humbly: “ Now, Reverend Mother, I have a favour to ask of *you*. I have a brother who has a little girl; he is very strong, and a steady man and industrious; may I make room for him in my little house in the garden? You would see how much more work we should get through than I could do alone.”

“ Well,” said the Prioress, “ but what about the little girl?”

“ My brother would be very glad if she could come to your school,” said Fauchelevent; and so it was decided, the Prioress saying the brother might come to her to-morrow after the funeral.

Then Fauchelevent went back to Jean and told him all that had passed. “ So,” he said, “ it's all right except about your getting out from here. *Couldn't* you get out the way you came in?”

Jean knew the police would certainly be on the watch in the road from which he had entered, and he turned cold

all over. "No, that's impossible," said he. Then, after considering a minute:

"The earth will rattle about in that coffin of yours," he said.

"Yes—that's true—" replied the gardener; "well, I can't think of anything better, can you?"

"Yes," said Jean. "I have something much better in my mind. They shall take out *me* in that coffin."

At this wild proposal Fauchelevent thought his friend must be mad, but on consideration the thing seemed just possible, and they worked out all the details. Jean was to slip into the convent that night with Fauchelevent, and hide in a little room near where the coffin was. Before morning he was to get in, and the gardener was to nail the lid on rather loosely, and also to make some breathing-holes where they would not be noticed; he was also to go with the hearse to the cemetery, and when the funeral was over, persuade the sexton, who was a friend of his, to come with him to a public-house and drink, before filling in the grave. Then Fauchelevent was to make him tipsy, offer to go back and do his work for him, and really he was to hasten to open the coffin and let out his friend. None of the nuns would go to the funeral, for they never left the convent or its grounds. All this sounded possible, though rather risky, and all was carried out satisfactorily till they reached the cemetery. The coffin was lowered into the grave, the priest read the service, and then everyone went away but Fauchelevent and the sexton. But it

was a *new* sexton! Still Fauchelevent thought perhaps he would come and drink with him, but the man was not to be tempted, and threw a shovelful of earth into the grave. When he heard this Jean Valjean fainted away.

Fauchelevent was nearly at his wits' end, but as the sexton stooped down the corner of a white card showed, sticking out of his pocket, and this gave the old gardener a gleam of hope, as a scheme flashed into his mind. He knew that this card was one which must be shown to the man at the gate of the cemetery if the sexton wished to pass out or in after the time at which it was closed to the public. In a moment the card had been whipped out of his pocket and was in that of Fauchelevent, who then said:

"How late it's getting! They'll be shutting the gates in ten minutes—but I suppose you've got your card all right?"

"Oh yes," said the man, feeling, however, in his pockets; as he did so a look of dismay came over his face.

"I must have left it at home," he gasped; "and there's a ten-shilling fine if one hasn't got it!"

"Well, I wouldn't be you!" cried Fauchelevent, and then: "I'll tell you what, you'd better run off home before the gates shut, and get the card, and I'll wait here and help you with this work when you come back."

"You *are* a good fellow," said the other, and tore off at once. The moment he was out of sight the old man leaned over the grave and cried: "M. Madeleine!"

There was no answer. Fauchelevent leapt down, and with one of the gravedigger's tools he prized open the lid of the coffin. What was his horror when he saw the colourless face and rigid form of his friend!

"Ah, he is dead!" he cried, trembling and panting with horror. "I might have known he could not live through such an awful time."

But at this moment there was a quiver of the eyelids; then Jean Valjean opened his eyes wide, and Fauchelevent, with tears of joy, lifted his shoulders and helped him to get out of the coffin and out of the grave.

The fresh air soon revived Jean, and then the two men set to work to fill up the grave. When this was done, they went out, showing the sexton's card at the gate, and then Fauchelevent went to the sexton's house, where he found him frantically searching for the card.

"It's all right," said Fauchelevent; "I've filled up the grave for you, and then I found your card on the ground, where you must have dropped it." At this the sexton was, of course, very grateful.

Meanwhile Jean went to the house to which Cosette had been taken, and next morning he appeared with her at the convent, where the Prioress, according to her promise, took the little girl into the school and employed "old Fauchelevent's brother" in the garden; and so they lived peacefully for years. Jean, at least, had no desire for further excitement.

THE HOUSE OF MISERY AND CRIME

In a very poor part of Paris there stood at the time of our story a big, wretched, tumble-down house, in which lived, first, an old woman who owned it, and who opened the door, swept the stairs occasionally, and was supposed to look after things generally; secondly a young man named Marius; and thirdly a family consisting of a father, mother, and two daughters, named Jondrette.

The old woman was thin and hungry (indeed they were *all* thin and hungry); she was always grumbling because, as she said, "Everything is dear; nothing is cheap but trouble—that's cheap enough"; and because half the house was empty, for Marius and the Jondrette family only had one room each, and the other rooms were in such a bad state that nobody would take them.

Marius was a student of about twenty. He had a rich grandfather who had brought him up, but when he found that his grandfather had never forgiven his son, the father of Marius, for taking service under Napoleon I (for the old gentleman was a strong Royalist) and even that his father, who had fought most bravely at Waterloo, had

been allowed to die neglected and in great poverty, there was such a quarrel between Marius and his grandfather that it resulted in his being turned out of the house; so now he was living on very little, and studying hard so as to be able to earn his own livelihood soon. One thing he often thought of; his father had left a piece of paper on which he had written that when he was wounded at the battle of Waterloo a soldier named Thénardier had helped him, and if his son were ever to come across Thénardier, he must do what he could for him.

Study did not, however, occupy the *whole* of Marius' time; he had managed to fall in love! Here, however, he was equally unfortunate; he did not know the name of the beautiful girl he had so often seen in some pleasure gardens with an old gentleman who seemed to be her father, but he had been quite happy in merely walking past the seat on which they sat, and noticing that she looked at him as well as he at her; only for some time now they had not come to the gardens, and he did not know where they lived. He had roamed all Paris in search of her, but Paris is such a big town that this was quite hopeless.

But the most wretched people in the old house were the family of Jondrette. The room they occupied was a large one, just under the roof, with all sorts of dark corners where it seemed as if evil things must be hiding; it was fearfully dirty; there was one small window covered with cobwebs and never opened, two miserable bedsteads with

old mattresses and no bed-clothes, one chair, and a fireplace in which occasionally there were one or two logs of wood burning. There was also a rickety table, various rags hanging on nails, and bits of broken glass and crockery. Jondrette himself was a little lean man with a wicked and cunning face full of wrinkles, in which the small eyes, close together, were full of malice and deceit. His wife was a great red woman, as tall as a tall man; her red hair was turning grey, but she was still immensely strong; and yet, for all that, she always obeyed her husband, partly because she was fond of him in her way, and partly because she really feared him. The two girls were about sixteen and fourteen; they never had enough to eat, and were just skin and bone, their hands were swollen and red, their wretched clothes hardly covered them, and what was worse, they had been allowed to run about the streets so that they had picked up all sorts of bad words and ways. The whole family lived partly by begging and partly by stealing. There are people like this in all our big towns. One member of the family I have forgotten, as the rest of them nearly always did; this was little Gavroche, the youngest child, a boy of eleven. His mother disliked him and would not have him in the house, so he lived entirely in the streets, sleeping wherever he could, under archways, on seats in the public gardens, and so on, and constantly getting interfered with by the police; occasionally he came to see his parents—perhaps once in two or three months—but he was not welcomed,

though he was a very intelligent and amusing little boy.

For a long time Marius was so much occupied with his studies and his love affair that he did not even know the other lodgers by sight, though their room was next to his. One morning, however, there was a knock at his door, and when he said "Come in" there entered a tall lanky girl in rags, with a piece of paper in her hand. She looked as if she might have been pretty as a child, but she was certainly not pretty now, with her untidy, matted hair and dirty red hands and bare feet. She was not at all shy and did not seem ashamed of her appearance; she handed Marius the piece of paper and then wandered about the room, looking curiously at everything. The paper appeared to be a letter; it was strongly scented with bad tobacco, and addressed to "My noble young neighbour" and ran thus:

" Most highly respected Sir,

" I trust you will excuse my troubling you, but I have fallen into undiserved misery and I believe you have a sympathetic heart. You will feel for a litterary man who has been ruined by malitious enemys. I have sent my daughter in to you, which I know is a great libarty, but I think when you see the poor child you will send us back a trifle.

" Your most obedient servant,

" JONDRETTE."

Of course Marius could see that this was not the letter of a "literary man", but still he was very sorry for the poor people, and began fumbling in his pockets. Meanwhile the girl was humming street songs.

"Oh, you've got books," she said. "I can read!" She opened one and read: "His regiment suffered severely at Waterloo." "My father was at Waterloo," she said; "he often talks about it, and we're all for Napoleón. I can write too," and before Marius knew what she was doing she had picked up a pen, dipped it in the ink, and, after considering for a moment, had written on a sheet of paper "The coppers are just coming", and then she threw back her head and laughed, for in *her* language "copper" meant "policeman".

By this time Marius had discovered four and eightpence in his pockets; he gave the girl the four shillings and kept the eightpence for himself. She went off at once, leaving the door open and kissing her hand to him in a familiar way. Marius now looked at the partition-wall between his room and the next; it was very thin and shaky, and at one place near the ceiling there was a little hole right through; Marius climbed upon his chest of drawers and found he could see everything in the next room, and also hear all that was said. He wanted to do so only in order to find out how he might help these poor people, for he was ashamed when he thought how long he had been wrapped up in his own affairs, and taken no notice of them. He saw the room already described; Jondrette

had taken the money from the girl, and was sending her on another errand.

"Now take this note," he said, "to the church where the old gentleman spoke to you, and give it to him at the end of the service; and don't come back with empty hands, mind you." The girl went off, and Marius returned to his reading. Suddenly he heard someone running upstairs and bursting into the next room; he mounted the chest of drawers and was in time to hear the Jondrette girl cry, "He's coming! They're coming!"

"Who?" asked the father.

"The old gentleman and his daughter. He said they were going in a carriage to buy some things, and then they would come round here."

"Are you sure you told him the way right? And the top room on the left?"

"Yes I did; they'll be here in a minute."

"Put out the fire," said Jondrette to his wife. As she only stared stupidly, he jumped up, poured some water on the wood, and then shovelled ashes over. It was snowing heavily outside. Then he kicked his foot through the seat of the one chair. Then he said to the younger girl, "Break the window." She hesitated for a moment, but at a furious glance from her father she leapt to the window and smashed it with her fist. Her mother cried out:

"The poor child has cut her hand!"

"I know," said Jondrette; "*that's* all right."

Then he made his wife go and lie on a mattress, and then looked round like a general who is prepared for the enemy. He was only just in time, for a knocking was heard at the door. Jondrette threw it open and bowed humbly to the old gentleman and young lady who came in. There was someone, however, who was still more excited by their entrance than all the rest; this was Marius, who, still peeping through his little hole, at last saw once more the beautiful girl whom he had sought for so long. There was no doubt that it was she; her clear blue eyes, her rich brown hair, her graceful walk, her sweet expression, half kind, half shy, were well known to him; she was very prettily dressed in a soft dark beaver hat and fur-trimmed coat, and she carried a big parcel which she laid on the table. Jondrette, too, had seen a resemblance, not at first in the young girl, but in the old gentleman, to someone he had seen before; and while he was pouring out a piteous tale about his sick wife and drawing attention to his broken window, absence of fire, &c., he managed to whisper to his wife: "Look at him well. Don't you remember him?" and then later on, "and that's the child!" The young lady was very pitiful over the younger girl's wounded hand, which her father explained as having been injured at a factory at which he said she worked; and the old gentleman listened kindly while Jondrette declared that he owed his rent for a long time, that it amounted to three pounds, that he was always trying to find work but had

been unlucky, and that unless he paid this evening they would be turned out of the house. The young lady opened the parcel and gave them some warm clothes she had bought, and her father said: "I have not three pounds about me now, but I will go home and bring it back this evening." He handed Jondrette some silver; the man overwhelmed him with thanks, and the visitors departed, promising to be back by six o'clock. Then Jondrette, or Thénardier, as his real name was, turned to his wife and said:

" Didn't you recognize them? "

" Well, I did *him*, when you reminded me. But is that the *child*?" and she ground her teeth with fury. " She used to be ugly, and now she's pretty and well-dressed, while *my* poor girls go in rags!" Her girls were at the moment putting on some clothes brought them by the charming Cosette, who had, when a child, been so cruelly treated in their house. The man took no notice of his wife's rage, and soon went out of doors, returning about an hour later. Marius meanwhile had been desperately running in the direction taken by Cosette's carriage; of course this was of no use, and he calmed himself by remembering that her father at least was to come back at six, and returned to his post

When Jondrette, or Thénardier, came back, he sent his daughters out, but said they were to be back at five o'clock. He then began talking to his wife in a low voice; Marius could not catch all that was said, but he

gathered that the man and his wife knew the old gentleman and his daughter, but had not been recognized by them, and that the man had some wicked plot for robbing or perhaps murdering the former when he came that night. He said he had seen some people whose names Marius could not catch; and that he was now going out to see *some more, and to get something from an ironmonger's.*

One remark which reached the young man's ear was: "If I can get the Tom-cat to undertake it, it's sure to go right." Then he took the money his visitor had given him and departed. Marius was left in a state of terrible anxiety; the father of his beloved was evidently in extreme danger, but how could he warn him, when he did not know his address? Then if he were to wait at the front door till the victim arrived, he would certainly be seen by the girls who would be watching, and, of course, the men who were coming would overpower them. The house was the last in a very lonely street, quite in the outskirts of Paris; everything favoured the intended crime. There was only one thing to do, and the time was getting short; Marius put on his coat and hat, crept very softly out of the room and downstairs (for he knew he was supposed to be out), and asked at the first shop he came to where the nearest police-station was. It was at some distance; when he reached it he asked for the chief inspector, and was shown into a small room with very plain furniture, where a tall man was standing. He had strong features, greyish hair, and a look in

his eycs as if he could see the inside of your pockets. He said:

“ You wish to make a statement, do you not?”

“ Yes,” said Marius, glancing uneasily round; “ but it’s a very private matter.”

“ Then you had better tell me all about it,” said the Inspector calmly.

“ It’s very urgent.”

“ Then you had better tell me quickly.”

Marius told him all he knew. At the end the Inspector said:

“ I expect the Tom-cat is in it.”

“ Why,” cried Marius, “ the man *did* mention that name. Who is the Tom-cat?”

“ It’s *four* men,” was the answer; “ but I can’t waste time telling you about them. Have you a latch-key? Please give it me.”

Marius gave up his latch-key.

“ Now,” said the Inspector, “ take these pistols ”—handing Marius two small steel pistols. “ They are loaded with two balls each. Go back to your post of observation, and, when it’s time, discharge one of them—at the ceiling or anywhere. That will be the signal for me. *Don’t be too early with it.* We must catch them at their work. If you want me between now and then, ask for Inspector Javert. Good-afternoon.”

“ If I were you,” said Marius as he departed, “ I should bring a strong force.”

Javert looked at him as Wellington might have looked if a lieutenant had offered him advice at Waterloo.

Marius now hurried home, for he was afraid of arriving after the old woman had gone out, as she always did in the evening, and then she shut the door, and of course he had not his key. He was just in time, and stole noiselessly up to his room a few minutes before the old woman was heard to bang the front door. He removed his shoes, and, as lightly as a cat, he mounted the chest of drawers, and once more looked through the hole. The woman and the two girls were crouching near a great stove filled with glowing charcoal, which had been produced from some corner and placed in the fire-place. The red light shone brilliantly on the common, sordid objects about the room, and cast black shadows into the corner. There was a candle too, but its light was very dim in comparison. Near the door were two heaps—one seemed to consist of cords, and the other of iron tools of some kind. Marius remembered that in passing one of the empty rooms as he stole along the passage he had heard slight sounds, and he was convinced that the preparations for the crime had already begun.

In a few minutes Jondrette came into the room, carrying a large pair of steel shears with wooden handles. It was now about a quarter to six. He at once proceeded to give his orders.

“ Eponine and Azelma, go out and keep guard; Eponine as far to the right as possible, without losing sight of the



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"I AM 'THENARDIER'!"

front door—Azelma to the left. If you see any chance of our being disturbed, run like the wind and warn us."

The girls ran off. "Now," he said to his wife, "heat those shears in the charcoal." She thrust them into the red-hot mass. "And now go downstairs with the lantern, for it's snowing hard and he'll come in a cab; show him upstairs, and then run down again, pay the cabman and send him away."

"Where's the money for the cabman?" she asked.

"Why, here; it's what the young man next door gave us. I suppose he's out, by the by? You'd better look and see."

"Oh, yes, he's *always* out at this time," said his wife, but nevertheless she turned to the door. Marius had just time to hide under the bed. He had no light in his room, but the moon was streaming in, for there was a break in the snow-storm. He heard the door open; the woman put her head in and glanced round, shouted to her husband that it was all right, and went downstairs. In another minute Marius was at his post again. The man was putting an old screen in front of the fire; then he began turning over the heap of cords, and Marius now saw that there was a rope-ladder with strong hooks by which to hang it to a wall or window-sill. Jondrette began talking to himself. "We ought to have some more chairs," he said; "I'll just get two from next door." This time Marius could not possibly get down before the man would be in the room, so he simply stayed where

he was. He was up in the corner near the window, and the moonlight streaming in left a great triangle of shadow there, so Jondrette, who had no suspicion, took his chairs without looking towards Marius, who held his breath hard. Six o'clock struck; Marius took one of the pistols from his pocket, cocked it, and held it in his right hand. Soon the door opened and the big woman entered, with a grimace that was meant to be amiable, followed by the old gentleman. No noise of a cab had been heard, the snow being deep. At a glance from her husband she went away again, and when she came back the cab had gone as noiselessly as it had come.

Jondrette begged his visitor to be seated, and took a chair himself on the other side of the table. The old gentleman brought out his purse, and handed Jondrette a five-pound note. "There," he said kindly, "that will pay your rent and give you a little in hand; and then we must talk over what can be done." Jondrette had quite hidden the fire by the screen, and the candle was a very poor one, so the chief light in the room came from the moon; it shone upon the white hair of the good old gentleman and showed his peaceful expression. Madame Jondrette had come back, and was standing near the door.

"How is the little girl who hurt her hand?" asked the visitor.

"Very bad," answered Jondrette. "She has been taken by her sister to have it dressed at the hospital."

At this point Marius became conscious that a man had slipped into the room by the open door and seated himself on one of the beds. His face was blackened with soot, and he had no shoes on. His shirt-sleeves were rolled up, leaving his arms bare. Where he sat he was hardly visible, but the old gentleman noticed him and said: "Who is that?"

"Only a neighbour," said Jondrette.

"Your wife seems much better now," said the other quietly, and then added: "Are these also neighbours?" for three more men, one after the other, blackened like the first, had entered equally noiselessly, and the four were now seated on the bed, with arms folded, leaning against the wall.

"Yes, most of the people about here are chimney sweeps," said Jondrette carelessly, and then began a long story about a picture he had to sell, a valuable picture, which he was sure his kind friend would buy from him. During this harangue, Marius noticed that the visitor had gently moved his chair nearer to the window, but he showed not the slightest sign of fear; only he glanced about the room with an appearance of calculating his chances. "Let us see this picture," he said. Jondrette brought forward something like the sign of a tavern, which he held so that Marius could distinguish nothing. "How much do you think it is worth?" he asked.

"About half a crown," was the answer.

"Will you give me three hundred pounds for it?" and the wolfish eyes were fixed and glaring.

"Certainly not." At this moment a slight sound in the direction of the door made the visitor look round; four more men had just entered—he was in the presence of—the Tom-cat! They were all blackened or wore masks and had their arms bare like the others; each had a weapon of some kind; one of the four was an enormous man and carried a great mallet used for stunning an ox. Jondrette had only been talking to fill up the time till they came. He now asked them quickly: "Is everything ready?" "Yes." "The cab at the door?" "Yes." "The carriage at the other place?" "Yes." "Two good horses?" "Yes." Three of the men on the bed had got up, picked up things from the pile of iron on the floor, and were now guarding the door.

Jondrette turned to his visitor.

"Now, do you know who I am?" he thundered.

"No, I don't," was the quiet answer.

"I am *Thénardier!*"

This statement apparently had no effect on the man to whom it was made, but it nearly caused Marius to drop his pistol. This then was the man whom his dying father had recommended to him, bidding him do him any service in his power! And now he was preparing to give him up to the police! For a few minutes he thought it might possibly not be the same man, but Thénardier, finding the old gentleman now absolutely in his power,

could not resist the opportunity of pouring all his spite upon him, and went on raging about how he knew who he was, that he was the same man who had come and stolen Cosette from him, that he was sure he had stolen all the money he possessed, that he, Thénardier, was an honest man and had fought at Waterloo, where he had saved the life of an officer named Pontmercy (the father of Marius); and he dragged the picture to the light, so that this time Marius could see a rough daub of a soldier carrying another on his back.

As he had turned to get the picture, however, the old gentleman, whom we know as Jean Valjean, had pushed away the chair with his foot, and the table with his hand, and with a bound was out of the window hanging from the sill. The men at the door were at once upon him, however; his arms were seized and he was dragged in again. His vigour and agility had astounded Marius as much as his calmness and courage. One of the men raised a bar of wood weighted with lead at the end and seemed about to bring it down on the head of Valjean. Marius exclaimed internally, "Forgive me, Father!" and was just about to pull the trigger of his pistol when Thénardier shouted: "Don't touch him." Thénardier, instead of getting more excited and angry, had become calm. A great struggle was going on; Valjean had stunned one man and forced two others to the ground, and had one of his knees on each of them; they were gasping, but the rest were upon him, and Madame Thénardier had

him by the hair. "Get out of this; you'll tear your shawl," said her husband, and he made the men let go too. Valjean left off struggling and allowed himself to be searched; they found nothing but five shillings and a handkerchief, which Thénardier took. Then they fastened him in a standing position to the end of the bed by one leg, and tied his arms behind his back. Thénardier then took a chair facing his prisoner and said:

"See here, I mayn't have been very reasonable just now, but that's over. You are a sensible man and understand that you are entirely in my power. I shall do you no harm at all if you do as I wish. I want a large sum of money—large for me, not for you, I dare say. Now, I am going to dictate a letter and you must write it."

"How can I write with my hands tied?" asked Valjean. Marius felt proud of the coolness of Cosette's father.

"There's something in that," answered Thénardier. "Undo his right arm." He then held paper, and a pen dipped in ink, so that his victim could write, and began to dictate.

"My dear child."

"Who is that?" asked Valjean.

"You know quite well: Cosette."

The old man wrote it.

"Come here at once in the cab with the person who brings this. I particularly want to see you here." "Now, I don't know your name; what is it?" "Urbain Fabre."

Thénardier whipped the handkerchief out of his pocket and found it marked "U.F."

"And the address?"

"No. 17, Rue St. Dominique."

The letter was now written and addressed, and Thénardier gave it to his wife, to whom he whispered some instructions. She and one of the men went off in the cab.

Meanwhile he took away the screen from before the charcoal fire, and showed the great shears heated red-hot in it; he seated himself before it, warming his feet, and explained to Valjean:

"You see your girl will be taken away by that man in a carriage with two good horses till she's quite out of reach of the police; *we* have means of letting him know what happens, and unless you let us have ten thousand pounds in a day or two, he'll—well, I needn't go into details." Then he went on warming his feet, and Marius considered in agony that even if he discharged his pistol now, that would not save his beloved Cosette. Her father, however, showed no emotion, and so they all sat, or rather the prisoner stood, apparently still, and yet Marius seemed occasionally to hear a very slight noise in his direction. After nearly an hour the door burst open, and there stood Madame Thénardier, her face flaming with fury, and the man behind her.

"We're done! He's cheated us!" she cried. "There's nobody of the name at that address, and nobody knew anything about them!"

Thénardier faced round upon Valjean. He was not violent like his wife, but he looked at the shears in the fire and his eyes blazed with cruel hatred. He smiled ferociously. "And what was the good of that?" he asked the prisoner.

"*To gain time!*" cried the old man, and, lifting his arms, showed both free; he was now only tied by the one leg, and, stooping forward, he seized the shears from the fire and brandished them above his head. Everyone fell back. Later on there was found in the room a penny cut in two between the faces, and then each side hollowed out so as to make a tiny box, in which a little knife-blade could be concealed; this he had held in his hand while being searched, and with the blade he had cut his cords, all but those round the leg, for stooping would have betrayed him. Devices like this were common among the prisoners at the galleys.

"Poor creatures!" said Valjean, "you need not be afraid of me, any more than I am afraid of you," and he flung the red-hot shears through the window.

"Do what you like with me," added the now unarmed man.

The others stood irresolute; Marius also could not make up his mind what to do, between respect for his dead father's wish and the desire to prevent harm to this splendid old man, who stood quietly facing all these villains. Just under him, however, so close to his own wall that he could not see the speakers, a low rapid talk

was going on between Thénardier and his wife. It ended thus:

“ There’s only one thing to do now.”

“ Finish him?”

“ Yes.” And the man advanced towards Valjean with a knife in his hand. Marius in despair glanced round his own room as if to find *something* that would help, and his eye was caught by the piece of paper on which Eponine had written in the morning “ The coppers are just coming.” An idea flashed into his mind; he seized the paper, wrapped it round a little bit of plaster from the wall, and threw it from the hole so that it fell into the middle of the next room. Thénardier started; his wife picked up the paper and opened it.

“ Where did it come from?” asked the man.

“ One of the girls must have thrown it in through the window, of course,” she answered; “ it’s Eponine’s writing—now, look here!” Thénardier read it, said a word to the man with the mallet, and the latter raised his arms and three times rapidly opened and closed his fingers. This was the signal for flight; the rope-ladder was at once hung from the window, and Thénardier, calling to his wife, flew to it—but the man with the mallet seized him by the collar, crying: “ After us!”

“ Don’t be fools,” cried Thénardier; “ we shall be caught.”

“ Well, then, we’ll draw lots who is to go first,” shouted one of the men.

"You stupid fool, there's no time," answered Thénardier, struggling to get out; "do you want to draw papers out of a hat, or——?"

"Will you make use of *mine*?" said a clear and calm voice; all turned to the door, where, smiling and holding out his hat, stood Inspector Javert.

In a moment every man had seized a weapon of some kind from the floor; as for Madame Thénardier, she took up a great paving-stone which was lying by the hearth. Javert came a few steps into the room, holding a little stick. One of the men handed a pistol to Thénardier, saying:

"That's Javert. I daren't fire at him. Dare you?"

"I should think so!" He raised the pistol.

"It's of no use," said Javert. "It will miss fire."

Thénardier pressed the trigger. No shot followed. The man with the mallet threw it down before Javert and said:

"It's no good trying anything with you. I give in." At his example the rest also threw down their weapons. At a sign from Javert policemen came in from the passage and handcuffed them all. Suddenly a shout was heard "Don't come near me!" It was not a man's voice, but it was not much like that of a woman. The woman it was, however, who now stood in a corner with feet wide apart, her face red, her eyes flaming, and the paving-stone held in both hands above her head. Everyone but Javert retired hastily; he still stood in the middle of the room. Then, swaying for a minute backwards and forwards, the

giantess flung the great stone with all her might at the inspector's head. He bent down at the right moment and the stone passed over him, broke masses of plaster from the wall, and bounded to the opposite one, returning to lie peaceably at his heels. When the dust had subsided, Madame Thénardier was handcuffed.

"Now," said Javert to a policeman, "unfasten the gentleman." Meanwhile he got out his pen, ink, and paper, and settled himself comfortably at the table. When he was ready he said: "Bring the gentleman here."

"Why," cried the man, "he was here a moment ago; I can't see him now." All looked round; the criminals were all present, but their victim had vanished. Javert ran to the window; nobody was in sight, but the cords of the ladder were still trembling.

"He must have been the worst of the lot!" exclaimed the Inspector.

Marius had indeed noticed that throughout the scene the old gentleman had never given a cry for help; but it was long before he discovered the true meaning of this astonishing climax. He was, of course, called in, and learnt from Javert that he had easily secured Eponine and Azelma, and that after waiting some hours he had feared that something had happened to Marius himself, and had therefore come without the signal.

Next day a little boy came and knocked and kicked at the door of the house. At first there was no answer, but when the kicking threatened to break the panels of

the door, the old woman came grumbling along the passage, and opened it a little way.

"I've come to see my ancestors," said little Gavroche cheerfully.

"They ain't here," answered the gruff old woman.

"Where's my dad?"

"Locked up."

"Fancy that! And my dear Mamma?"

"Locked up."

"And the girls?"

"In a reformatory."

"Dear me! Oh well!" and he danced off, singing a street song at the top of his voice.

GAVROCHE

One evening little Gavroche, who had had neither breakfast, dinner, nor tea, and was feeling hungry, began to consider what his prospects were. He remembered a certain garden where there might be a chance of getting an apple. That does not sound very sustaining, but suppose you can't get anything else? He arrived at the garden, and would have had little trouble in getting through the hedge, but hearing voices he crouched down. An old man and woman were talking to each other. The old man was called M. Mabeuf; he had only one happiness in life, which was reading, and that day he had been forced to sell his last book to buy food, so he was very miserable. The old woman had no sensible suggestion to make, however, and soon went away, leaving him sitting on the garden-seat in deep sadness.

Just then Gavroche saw two figures coming along the lane. It was nearly dark, but he could see that the first was an old man with bent shoulders and white hair, and that the other was younger and appeared to be following him. When they were nearer Gavroche recognized the second as an acquaintance of his of a very disreputable kind; he went by the name of Parnassus, and was a

handsome young fellow of nineteen, well-dressed, and healthy, and active, but with such a dislike to honest work that he preferred a life of crime, and had already committed two murders. Gavroche was sorry for the poor old gentleman, but knew he could do nothing; in another minute Parnassus had sprung upon him—there was a short struggle, and then Gavroche saw one man on the ground, and the other holding him down vigorously with hand and knee. But what was his surprise when he saw that it was *Parnassus* who was underneath! After a little the old gentleman—who has probably been recognized by the reader—allowed the young fellow to get up, but still held both his hands together with one of his own. Then he said to him:

“Poor boy! How I wish I could convince you of your mistake in living a life like this! You little know what it will come to! You hate work—well, you will have to work so that your muscles ache all day, so that your back seems breaking, so that your head swims, so that all ordinary honest work seems like *play* to you. You must be your own master—well, you will not be able to leave your cell without filing bolts, picking locks, making ropes of your bed-clothes; and then when you have got out and are nearly dead with *fatigue*, you will be caught and brought back and treated worse than ever. You like to dress well—you will be dressed in prison clothes; you like to have the girls looking at you—you will never see a woman. In one word, you want life to

be easy, and you are making it intolerably hard for yourself. You are young—think of all this. Now, what did you want? My purse? Here it is,” and he handed it to the astonished thief, who from force of habit thrust it stealthily into his pocket. Valjean then walked on his way, and while Parnassus gazed after him stupidly, Gavroche slipped up behind him, cleverly removed the purse from his pocket and ran back to his garden, where he neatly dropped the purse over the hedge at the feet of M. Mabeuf and ran off undetected. The old man was delighted with the purse that came “from the skies”; it contained six pounds.

Another evening Gavroche was in the same condition, to judge by what he was saying as he gazed into a hairdresser’s shop. “Tuesday?” he murmured. “I think it must have been Tuesday.” If he was considering when he had dined last, it would account for his being hungry, for the day was Friday. He was wondering whether he could manage to run off with a cake of soap which he would sell for a halfpenny to a barber in a poor part, and meanwhile he pretended to be very much interested in a wax head, with a wreath of orange-blossoms, which was turning slowly round in the window. At this moment two little boys, one about seven and the other perhaps five, timidly entered the shop and spoke to the hairdresser. As they both spoke at once, and the younger was crying, it was not very clear what they said, but at any rate the man had no patience with them and

drove them out angrily, scolding them for "letting in the cold wind". It was true that the wind *was* very cold, as it often is on a March evening; Gavroche had very little on, and was shivering. He ran up to the two children and said:

"What's up with you, kiddies?"

"We're lost; we don't know where to sleep," answered the elder.

"Oh, is *that* all?" said Gavroche calmly. "The idea of crying for that!" And then with an air of kind authority he added:

"You just come along with me."

"Yes, sir," said the elder child, and they both followed him confidingly. Presently he asked them:

"Have you had your dinner, kiddies?"

"We haven't had anything since this morning, sir."

"Haven't you any father and mother?"

"I beg your pardon, sir, we have a father and mother, but we don't know where they are."

Upon this Gavroche thought "sometimes that's better than when you *do* know," but he only stopped and began feeling all over his rags. At last he discovered a half-penny, and tried hard not to look triumphant. He marched his children to a baker's, and, going up to the counter, said in a dignified manner:

"A halfpennyworth of bread. Kindly cut it in three." Then, when he saw the man going to a stale loaf, he added severely: "The *best* bread." He gave the children a



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THE BARRICADE

piece each, keeping the smallest for himself, and they all left the shop, munching hard. As they went along they met Parnassus, with whom Gavroche had a short conversation.

"Do you know where I'm going?" asked Parnassus.

"To the gallows," said Gavroche promptly.

"Silly child! I'm on business. If I happen to want you, where am I to find you?"

"In the 'Elephant'. I've got to put these kids to bed."

"In the——?"

"*Elephant!*" repeated Gavroche, and a short explanation followed, after which Parnassus hurried off, quite unconscious that it was Gavroche who had picked his pocket a short time back.

The children soon came in sight of the Elephant, a great structure made of stone, wood, and plaster, set up by Napoleon I, after he had come home from Egypt. The present Government was not favourable to the memory of Napoleon, and the Elephant was allowed to fall into decay. It stood in a piece of waste ground; the plaster was all falling off, and when the children stood under its body they could see a great hole just behind the two front legs. On the grass there was a ladder, left there by some workmen; Gavroche placed it up against the hole, and in a minute had disappeared; in another minute his head looked out again from above. The children were dreadfully frightened, but Gavroche held out his hand, and as it was very cold, and had begun to rain hard, the elder ventured up

the ladder. Gavroche drew him inside, and then went down, picked up the little one and placed him on the ladder and called to his brother to help him in. In a few minutes they were all inside, and Gavroche had pushed the ladder down upon the grass again.

"Now I'm going to light up," he said cheerfully, and, producing matches from somewhere, he lighted a dip-candle which he stuck in a crack in the Elephant's inside, and which gave a very smoky flame. There was a sort of floor made by all the bits that had fallen from above, and in one part Gavroche had contrived a bed, with a straw mattress, a good woollen covering, and a sort of tent-like protection of wire-netting. There were some stones which kept this in place; these Gavroche removed, told the children to creep in, followed them, and carefully replaced the stones.

"Where did you get all these things, sir?" asked the elder child timidly.

"From the Zoo. The blanket belonged to a monkey. The mattress was lent me by the giraffe. Isn't it comfy?"

"Oh, lovely, sir. What is the netting for?"

"For the rats. Get to sleep!" And Gavroche put out the light.

The elder child took his advice at once, but the younger became very nervous when he heard little scrambling sounds all about him; it even seemed as if something were trying to gnaw the wire-netting. He had not yet dared to

speak to Gavroche, but at last he said: "Oh, please, what are those noises?"

"The rats," was the answer.

"What *are* rats?"

"Sort of mice."

"Couldn't you have a cat, sir?"

"I did get one, but they ate it."

"Which ate what?"

"The rats ate the cat!"

"Oh, will they eat people?"

"No, they can't eat *us*, because of the netting; and *I'll* look after you—just hold my hand and get to sleep." And Gavroche held out his hand over the bigger boy, and they were soon all fast asleep.

About five o'clock in the morning Gavroche was awaked by a tapping on the under side of the Elephant. He looked out through the hole, saw Parnassus, and dropped down in a moment.

"We want you," said Parnassus, and as they hurried along he explained that a man (one of his gang) had nearly escaped from prison; he had got as far as the roof of the prison laundry, where he was now lying exhausted; some of his friends had seen him, but there was no way of getting him down except by taking a cord up to him, and this meant climbing up a crazy pipe which would not bear the weight of a man. Gavroche loved an adventure of this sort, and started to climb cheerfully; at this moment the man on the roof put his head over the edge, and when

the boy saw the pale, drawn face and haggard eyes, he cried:

“Why, it’s my dad! Never mind, I’ll go up all the same!” He was soon at the top, fastened the cord firmly and in another minute Thénardier was in the street, and the police would have a hard task if they wished to catch him again.

As the spring went on and the summer came, there were signs of an insurrection in Paris. Those were very unsettled times, and many people were discontented with the Government, and wanted to send away the King and have a republic. Some of the friends of Marius, and Marius himself, were on this side; and we may be sure that Gavroche was ready for anything exciting. He had lost his little friends again, for he could not always be with them, and they did not know Paris as he did; so on 5th June, 1832, Gavroche was seen alone, running with all his might, carrying an old pistol which would not work, in the direction of a street from which he heard shots. As he passed a nobleman’s house he called up at the windows: “Follow me and fight for your country!” Then he seemed to become sad, and, gazing at his pistol, said:

“I go off, but *you* don’t!” Here his attention was attracted by a half-starved dog. “Poor thing,” said Gavroche, “I’m afraid you’ve swallowed a barrel; I can see all its hoops inside you.” Presently he saw a troop of young men, armed with rifles, all going in one direction;

he joined them, and so did an old man of eighty, whom he recognized as the same to whom he had thrown the purse. One of the young men said:

“ You’d better go home, M. Mabeuf.”

“ Why should I?”

“ There are going to be rows.”

“ All right.”

“ Fighting, shooting, cannon.”

“ All right. Where are *you* going?”

“ To upset the Government.”

“ All right,” and the old man continued to follow them.

Gavroche ran on ahead, singing a street song. Others joined them constantly from side streets, and at last, when they stopped at the door of a certain inn, there were about fifty of them. The leader was a tall, fair young man named Enjolras, with curling hair and features like a Greek statue. At the door of the tavern he cried “ Halt!” One of his friends was inside; coming out he called to Enjolras:

“ What are you going to do?”

“ Make a barricade.” *avis*

“ Here?”

“ Yes; it’s a good place.”

It needs a little description to make it clear why the place was a good one. The inn was at the end of a short, narrow road, which seemed to be a blind alley; but really there was a cross-road, like the top of the letter T, only it was very narrow, and not straight but winding. The

road which the inn faced was called Rue de la Chanvrerie, and the little cross-road Rue de Mondétour. Enjolras and his friends made a big barricade across the former road, with paving-stones, empty barrels from the cellar, iron bars from the windows, and a cart which was passing full of lime; both the lime and the cart were upset upon the barricade. As they were working an omnibus was seen passing the open end of the Rue de la Chanvrerie; one of the insurgents leaped over their barricade, ran to the omnibus, made the coachman get down, politely handed out the ladies, led the horses up to the barricade, unharnessed them and drove them away, and the omnibus, overturned, was added to the barricade. Its pole was fixed upright, and a red flag fastened to it. All this time Gavroche was flying about fetching all sorts of things, teasing the lazy ones, and giving everyone an example of energy.

“There’s a glass door! We’ll have it!” he cried.

“What’s the good of that, you imp?” asked one of the insurgents.

“Imp yourself! Haven’t you ever tried to climb over a wall with broken bottles on the top? Glass is very good for a barricade; it will cut the soldiers’ corns for them!”

The barricade left a clear space in front of the inn. Here Enjolras had a table placed, on which was a square box, and opening it he served out cartridges to as many as had rifles. As they were still undisturbed, more paving-stones were pulled up, and a second barricade

was made across one of the arms of the cross-street; the other opened on such a maze of little lanes that it was not thought likely they would be attacked from that side, and it was necessary to have some way out for themselves. All the houses in the road had shut their doors, windows, and shutters.

On the ground floor of the inn was a large room, very dark, for the windows were barricaded. In it was a tall man who had joined the party as it went along the roads, and had been given a big rifle. He seemed to be examining everything very carefully, but did not observe that he himself was under the examination of Gavroche, who, standing in a dark corner, was exhibiting every sign of surprise. Having at last made up his mind he ran to the door, and met Enjolras coming in.

"Ah, little fellow," said Enjolras, "I want you to get out and run about and see if there are any soldiers coming, and then run back and tell us."

"Wait a minute," whispered Gavroche; "you see that man?" pointing behind him.

"Well, do you know him?"

"He's a spy."

At a sign from Enjolras four strong workmen from the barricade came in and placed themselves behind the tall man.

Then Enjolras said to him: "Who are you?"

The man looked round, saw himself taken, and said: "I see you know."

He was searched; on him was found a paper addressed to "Inspector Javert", and containing this order: "When you have finished your work at the barricade, go to the left bank of the Seine, near the market, and see if certain criminals have a refuge about there." There was a wooden post up to the ceiling in the middle of the room, and to this Javert was now bound.

"Let me have his gun," pleaded Gavroche.

"Well, when you come back," said Enjolras. Gavroche skipped over the barricade, which was about a man's height, but had steps arranged on the inside, and disappeared.

"Why don't you shoot me?" Javert asked Enjolras.

"Can't afford to waste powder at present. Your turn will come," replied the young man.

Meanwhile another man who had joined the band proceeded to act on his own account. The houses near the inn were very high, and this man, called Le Cabuc, pointed out one to some of the others, and said:

"We ought to get in there, and fire from the top windows." Then he went and knocked violently at the door. There was no answer. He beat the door with his musket. It was now dark. At last a window was opened, and a candle and an old man's head appeared at it. "What do you want?" asked a trembling voice

"Let us in!"

"I daren't."

"Let us in, I say," and the man with the musket pointed it at the old man, who could see nothing in the dark street.

"Indeed I——" the sentence was unfinished, for the old man was shot in the neck and fell forward dead.

Enjolras, hearing the shot, was upon the murderer in a moment and had forced him to his knees. He was deadly pale, his hair was flying, his beautiful eyes blazing with righteous anger.

"Say a prayer if you can," he said; "you have one minute." The man murmured "Pardon" and sank in a heap. Enjolras looked at his watch, at the end of a minute replaced it, put his pistol to the wretch's head, fired it, and then said to the men about him: "Throw that outside."

The body was thrown down in front of the barricade, and at this moment Gavroche was heard at a little distance singing a song which ended with the crowing of a cock.

"That's our warning," cried Enjolras; "to your places!"

In a minute the little fellow was seen tearing up the road; over the barricade he climbed like a cat and then panted out: "Give me my gun; they're coming!" The insurgents now arranged themselves, most of them behind the barricade, with their gun-barrels poking through cracks, and a few up at the windows of the inn. Soon a regular tramp was heard, growing louder and louder, and at last it was possible to distinguish something moving at the other end of the road, and faint gleams of light re-

vealed the arms of the soldiers. Then a loud voice cried:

“Who goes there?”

“The French Revolution,” cried Enjolras in reply.

“Fire!” and a blaze of light was followed by a terrific noise; two or three men fell wounded by balls which had glanced off the house-walls, and the red banner fell, for the omnibus-pole was shot through just at the top.

The leader cried: “Do not reply; we have no powder to waste. But the flag must be set up again; who will do it?” For a moment there was no answer, for the soldiers were heard reloading, and to mount the barricade seemed certain death; but the door of the inn opening, out walked M. Mabeuf, the old man of eighty who had insisted on joining them; he went up to Enjolras, took the flag from his hand and began slowly to mount the steps up the barricade. Everyone applauded, but he did not even seem to hear them. When he reached the top he waved the flag and cried: “Long live the Republic!”

“Fire!” cried the voice of the officer.

M. Mabeuf fell backward and lay on his back, his arms stretched out wide. Enjolras gently drew off his coat, and said: “This shall be our flag now! Take his body into the room, and lay it on the table.” There was a table behind the post to which Javert was fastened, and on this the body was laid, and covered with an old black shawl belonging to the innkeeper’s wife.

The soldiers now tried a new plan. Enjolras, turning away from the table, was met by Gavroche, who cried:

“They’re storming the barricade!”

It was true that the uncertain light now showed helmets surmounting the barricade, and gun-barrels pointed at the defenders. All who were in the inn rushed out, and a hand-to-hand fight took place. Gavroche aimed at a soldier with Javert’s big gun; he drew the trigger, but nothing happened, for Javert had not loaded it. The man laughed and advanced upon the child with his bayonet, but in another minute he lay stretched on the ground by a shot from Marius, who was armed with the two little pistols Javert had given him some time ago. Then he seized a barrel of powder which had been placed near the door, rolled it up against the barricade, held a torch in his hand and shouted so as to be heard above all the confusion:

“Be off, all of you, or I’ll blow up the barricade!”

There was a pause, and when the soldiers saw this resolute young man standing bareheaded, ready to sacrifice his own life, there was a hasty retreat, and the road in a short time was emptied of troops.

Then Marius said to Gavroche:

“I want you to take a letter for me.”

Gavroche began to scratch his ear, but as Marius had just saved his life, he said nothing. Marius gave him the letter.

“You see,” he said, “it’s to Mademoiselle Cosette Fauchelevent, No. 17, Rue de l’Armée. Take it now and give it her to-morrow morning.”

"Couldn't I wait here till to-morrow morning?"

"No; by then we shall be surrounded and you couldn't get out." So Gavroche ran off with the letter, thinking: "It's only about midnight now—I'll deliver it at once and get back in time." He ran all the way and found the right street, but it was too dark to see the numbers. However, there was a man seated on the steps of a house. His head was in his hands and he seemed lost in sad thoughts, from which he was only roused by Gavroche touching him on the shoulder.

"Can you tell me which is number 17, old party?" asked the street-boy.

"This is it; whom do you want?"

"Mademoiselle Cosette Fauchelevent. I've a letter for her."

"Give it to me. She is asleep. I will give it her when she wakes." Gavroche looked a little suspicious, but he was in a great hurry to be back at the barricade, so he handed over his note and ran off again.

Jean Valjean went indoors and opened the note. He read only the first few lines.

"I am going to die. When you read this, my soul will be near you——"

He knew well enough from whom the letter came. He knew that Marius had discovered Cosette's dwelling-place and had had interviews with her in the garden. He knew that it was in vain he had tried to keep them apart; and yet it was so hard to give her up—the child whom

he had saved, to whom he had been everything, who was the one creature who loved him and had no suspicions of him! He could not help a gleam of joy in reflecting that if Marius was at the barricade he was almost certainly right in saying that he was doomed; but no selfish thought could long find a place in the old héro's mind, and the next thing he did was to put on his hat and coat, leave a note for Cosette to say he had gone out, together with the note from Marius, and follow the route taken by Gavroche to the barricade.

When Marius saw him arrive he was intensely astonished, but as the old man gave no sign of knowing him the younger did not dare to speak, but taking Gavroche aside, asked him:

“Did you deliver my letter?”

“Yes. The young lady was asleep, so I gave it to the porter.”

“Do you know that man?”

“No,” said Gavroche, gazing at Jean Valjean. He spoke truly, for when he gave him the letter it had been too dark to see his face.

It was now morning, and the insurgents knew that they were doomed, for the rising had evidently not spread; there was only one other barricade, and no doubt both would soon be taken. They had not long to wait before soldiers appeared at the end of the road, dragging a cannon which they pointed at the barricade. The first ball had no effect, but the next was aimed at the angle of

the barricade, and bounded off, killing two men and wounding three. This could not be allowed to go on. "A mattress," cried Enjolras. There was not one to be had. At one of the windows, however, of the neighbouring houses, an old woman had hung one up by two strings for a protection. Jean Valjean pointed his rifle, and next moment the mattress was hanging by one string only. He pointed it again, fired, and the mattress fell into the street. He then quietly climbed over the balustrade, picked up the mattress under a rain of bullets from the soldiers, brought it in and placed it carefully in position. The next time the cannon was fired the ball penetrated into the mattress and did not rebound. The insurgents overwhelmed Jean with thanks, and poured a volley upon the artillerymen, a number of whom were seen to fall.

"We're doing well," said one of his friends to Enjolras.

"Another quarter of an hour of doing well and there will be no powder left," replied the leader. Gavroche heard him, and, shortly after, a little figure was dimly seen through the smoke, running about in front of the barricade, and constantly stooping down. It was Gavroche with a basket under his arm, collecting cartridges from the pouches of soldiers who had been killed. He darted from one to the other and opened their pouches like a monkey opening a nut; and at first the smoke hid him from the troops at the end of the road, but as he

worked his way nearer to them he became visible. A shot struck a body which he was rifling.

"Don't kill my dead people!" he cried indignantly. Another knocked over his basket. Gavroche picked it up, put in the spilt cartridges, and began emptying another pouch, singing a comic song at the top of his voice. Ball after ball was aimed at the child; the soldiers could not help laughing at his antics. At last one caught him on the head; he dropped into a sitting position, a long stream of blood ran down his face, but he burst into another verse of his song. Before it ended another ball brought him with his face down in the road. He made no further movement. The great little soul had fled. Marius and another ran out, brought back the basket and the little body, and laid the latter on the table, next to that of M. Mabeuf. The black shawl was big enough to cover both.

THE LAST STRUGGLE

The insurgents had soon expended all their powder and saw that it would be impossible to hold the barricade any longer. Enjolras turned to Jean Valjean.

"Citizen, you have done well for us," he said; "is there anything you desire?"

"One thing," said the old man; "let me take charge of the execution of the spy."

Enjolras looked surprised, but said: "As you wish," and Valjean went into the room, unfastened Javert from the post, leaving his hands, however, still tied behind his back, and his feet loosely tied together, so that he could just walk with very short steps. Javert recognized him at once.

"Ah!" he said; "it's *your* turn now; well, that's fair enough."

Jean said nothing, but signed to him to follow. He led him to an angle of the wall, near to the smaller barricade across the Rue Mondétour. There he took out a great knife from a sheath.

"I suppose a knife *is* more in your line," muttered Javert.

His captor cut his cords and said: "You can go." Javert stared. The other simply turned away, and after a minute's stupefaction, the inspector departed, and, on making himself known to the soldiers, was, of course, not harmed by them. Meanwhile a final rush had been made on the great barricade, and the defenders having almost no more powder were obliged to retire into the house.

Enjolras and Marius were the last, and, just as the leader was entering, Marius, who was between him and the barricade, was shot in the shoulder. He stumbled up against the house. Enjolras thought he had come in with him, and the door was shut and bolted. Marius felt himself fainting, and the last thing of which he was conscious was that a strong hand seized him by the collar, and he said to himself: "I am a prisoner—I shall be shot."

The door could not long detain the soldiers; it was soon forced open, but they found no one in the room but the dead—Mabeuf and Gavroche on the table, and others on the floor. The wooden stairs had been hacked away with axes and hammers, and a great hole in the floor above showed the faces of those who remained of the desperate defenders. As long as they had any powder they shot at the soldiers, and when it gave out they flung bottles of brandy which they had found in the cellar, but in the end numbers prevailed. The last to fall was Enjolras; he stood facing the soldiers, fair and proud, almost unwounded; it seemed shameful to kill a creature so young and so noble, but he would not surrender, so the captain

gave the word "Fire!" and Enjolras fell on his face, with eight bullets in his body.

Marius had, indeed, fallen into the hands of somebody, but his captor was Jean Valjean. He carried him hastily to the place where he had parted from Javert, and then tried to think what could possibly be done. For the moment they were out of sight, for the soldiers were chiefly occupied with the house, but if even *one* of them were to take it into his head to come round the corner, they were lost. No way of escape presented itself; the Rue de la Chanvrerie was, of course, impossible; he could see bayonets over the barricade of the Rue Mondétour, and the other end of it was, of course, by this time guarded too. He thought of the desperate means by which he had escaped eight years before with Cosette; it was difficult then, now it was impossible. The houses were high and barricaded, and a wounded man is not so easily carried as a child. And yet *something* must be done immediately. The eye of Valjean, as it glanced around, was caught by an iron grating, level with the ground, close to the smaller barricade. The paving-stones round it had been pulled up, so that it was loose. It was about 2 feet square. A man who has been hunted notices many things which others pass by; he knew that it was the opening of a drain, and a possible chance of escape. In a moment he had pulled up the grating, taken Marius on his shoulders and descended the shaft which opened below, using hands, feet, and knees to

help him. About 9 feet down he felt the bottom. He pulled the grating back, and heard some stones from the barricade roll down it; and now, though he was only a few yards distant from it, the shouts and din from the house sounded faint and far away.

Everybody must have noticed these little gratings in our roads, but perhaps few think about the further fate of anything that goes down one of them. The whole of every large town like Paris is undermined by passages along which all the waste and dirty water from the houses, as well as the rain and mud of the streets, is rushing all day and all night in streams which open at certain places into the river. It is a great network, smaller passages opening into larger ones, and sometimes three or four meeting at one place. Of course it is quite dark, except where a little faint light comes from a grating. The air is horrible to breathe, and no creature lives there except the rats, which can swim, and are very big and fierce.

Jean found that the passage into which he had entered was just high enough to allow of his walking, very much bent, with Marius, still unconscious, on his back. After about a dozen steps the light from the grating failed utterly; there was a wall of darkness before him. Through it he pressed, with the rushing stream about his ankles, till he came to a cross-passage, where he must turn to right or left. How was he to know which to do? The answer came into his mind at once—he must follow that which sloped downward, for then he would eventually

come out upon the river-bank, if he could hold out so long. He held Marius' two hands with one of his own, and touched the wall with the other to feel his way; Marius' blood was flowing over him and he felt his breath on his cheek, and so he knew that he was alive. Again and again he was obliged to choose between two turnings, and all he could do was to try to follow the flow of the water.

In time, as his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, he found himself able just to distinguish the wall of the drain and a few vague objects. Another rule he went by in choosing turnings was to feel their width and, if there was any difference, choose the larger, for that would be the likelier to lead to the main drain. There was a sound above his head like far-off thunder; it was the carts and carriages, for he had now reached the part of Paris where there had been no rising, and the ordinary traffic was going on.

Suddenly he saw his shadow before him. He turned, and there was a light in the distance, a horrible dim red star which seemed to be looking at him! Behind it he saw some black figures, eight or ten of them, vaguely moving. Wearied, hungry, worn out with want of sleep as he was, he had no idea what they were, only that he must escape from them. As a matter of fact they were a band of police, who had been ordered to search the drains for any insurgents who might have escaped by them. They had heard his steps and were looking round.

Fortunately, though Jean could see their light very well, they could not see him, for he was in total darkness, and when he stopped to look at them they heard no more sounds. They were standing at a place where two passages crossed each other, making a little square space, and there they put their heads together and consulted. They agreed that they must have been mistaken, that there was nobody in the passage ahead, and that they had better turn back. The chief of them, however, to satisfy his conscience discharged his rifle down the passage. The bullet hit the roof above Valjean's head and a great piece of plaster fell and splashed the water about him. Then the light began to move, and the dark figures with it; but long after they had vanished, Jean Valjean still stood leaning against the wall, straining eyes and ears, for the horror of the darkness was upon him.

While this was going on, another pursuit was taking place on a deserted part of the bank of the Seine. Two men were walking along, the one at some distance behind the other. Neither seemed in a great hurry, but the man in front had a suspicious and hunted look. He was dressed in mere rags, while the other wore an excellent coat of an official appearance. They are both known to us—Thénardier and Javert. There was a path along the river bank, which sloped steeply, and considerably higher there was a road; an empty cab was passing along it, and Javert made a sign to the driver to follow, keeping within hail. The man did so. Javert considered that

he had good reason not to hurry. The man might have an appointment to meet others, who thus might be taken with him; and besides there was no possibility of his escaping, for a little farther on the path went up a rather steep incline and joined the road along which the cab was slowly progressing, where there would be plenty of policemen to come at Javert's whistle. At this point the river bank became rapidly narrower, and soon passed under the water.

Thénardier, however, when he reached this point did not go up the incline but continued along the narrow strip of bank. For a few minutes he passed out of sight, for there was just there a heap of stones which stretched from the embankment towards the river, and it was now between the two men. Javert, knowing that he was not observed now, hurried and arrived at the stones in a very short time. There was the triangular space of mud—the wall of the embankment on one side and the river on the other—but no man! He looked at the river—no one was in it, besides he would have heard the splash—he looked at the wall—impossible to climb. Suddenly his eye was caught by an iron grating in the wall, just where the bank ceased. There was a fairly large opening, with great strong iron bars fastened by an enormous lock. The iron was very rusty, but yet that grating must have been opened a minute ago; there were no signs of violence on it, and no sound had been heard. "Good heavens!" murmured Javert to himself, "he must have had a

Government key!" He sat down patiently near the grating, and the cabman waited above.

Jean Valjean pursued his dark, slippery, weary way, but hunger and fatigue were beginning to tell on him, and worst of all there was so little possibility of *hope*, for he might easily wander among the endless branches of the drain till he was exhausted, without finding an opening. Still it never occurred to him to abandon Marius, though he was doubtful whether the young man was still alive. He was obliged, however, to lay him down at intervals, and rest, and then it always seemed impossible to begin again. At one place, where they were under a fairly large grating, he searched Marius' pockets and found in one a few lines he had written during the barricade, begging anyone who found him dead to carry his body to his grandfather's and giving the address. Valjean took the paper, and said the address over to himself carefully several times. He also bound up Marius' wounds (for he was wounded in several places) with strips of his own shirt which he tore off. Then he went forward again, noticing vaguely that the light from the gratings was getting fainter, proving that the afternoon was wearing on, and that the sound of the carriages was also becoming less, showing that he was leaving the busy part of the town.

At the darkest place a new horror came upon him. So far he had had a firm though slippery surface to tread upon; now his feet began to go down into mud. First

the mud was up to his ankles and the water round the calves of his legs, then as he pressed on he sank deeper in the mud, and the water came up to his knees. It was a place where the paving had given way in consequence of repeated rains, and the mud made a sort of quicksand. If only he had not been burdened with Marius he might still have been light enough to pass through, but as it was, every step—for he struggled on, it was impossible to go back now—sank him deeper till at last anyone who could have seen inside that awful Slough of Despond would have beheld a white despairing face just above the level of the water, and a seemingly dead man held as high as possible by one last supreme effort.

Another moment, and Jean's foot encountered a hard substance—it was the paving beginning again! Absolutely at the end of his strength as he seemed, hope gave him fresh energy; the mud now became less and less deep, and at last he emerged on the other side of the bog, where he stumbled on a loose stone, and was brought down on his knees. He did not rise before he had thanked God; when he did so he was covered with mud and filth, soiled and disgusting, but with the halo of a saint and martyr shining about his venerable head.

After this his progress was easier, and he soon saw a light shining, not from above, but at the *end* of the passage. He hastened on—there was an opening—he could see the river, and the sky and clouds, and feel the

freshness of the air. He laid down Marius and went to the opening. It was strongly barred and locked. He tugged at the bars with all his might—impossible to move them. He was still a prisoner! He returned to the place where he had left Marius and sat down. All hope seemed fled, for as to retracing his steps, it was out of the question; his strength was at an end, and, in the first place, it would be impossible to pass again through the bog in which he had nearly perished. He sat on, and ceased to think, when hearing a slight sound he looked up, and saw a man before him. The dim light fell on this man's face, but Valjean had his back to it. He therefore recognized Thénardier, but the latter did not know him.

“Hullo!” said Thénardier; “I see what you're up to, and I don't mind helping you; but what I say is, share and share alike.”

“I don't understand,” said Valjean feebly.

“You want to get out, and get rid of that body, of course,” said Thénardier; “well, look here!” and from a pocket he brought forth an enormous key. Valjean's eyes gleamed; Thénardier went on:

“How much did you get?” Valjean searched in his pockets and brought out a sovereign and some silver. Thénardier also took the liberty of searching both his pockets and those of Marius, but found no more money and no watch.

“Well, that isn't much to kill a man for,” he said; and forgetting about “share and share alike”, he took it

all, and gave Valjean the key; he also pulled out a piece of cord and gave it him, saying:

“There now, I’ll give you that too.”

“What for?” asked the old man.

“Why, of course, when you throw the body in the river it will float if you don’t weight it; you’ll find plenty of big stones just outside,” and Thénardier disappeared into the darkness. Valjean immediately rose, carried Marius to the grating, turned the key in the lock, which made no sound, for it was kept well oiled by the criminals who habitually used it, and at last found himself in the open air!

The evening was closing in rapidly; the stars were just beginning to shine, and there was a sweet light breeze, unspeakably refreshing after the polluted atmosphere of the drain. Valjean gently laid Marius on the bank, took a handkerchief and dipped it in the river, and began sprinkling his face. He showed no signs of life; Valjean returned to the river with the handkerchief, but, as he stooped, a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder. He looked up and saw—Javert!

He understood at once that all was over; all his many escapes, and now the long agony in the drain, had ended in this. He was, however, quite unrecognizable, being covered with mud from head to foot.

“Who are you?” asked Javert.

“You have me at last.”

“Have you! Who’s that?”

"Jean Valjean."

Javert gazed at him fixedly and recognized him. His gaze became terrible.

"What are you doing here, and what is that man?"

"I want to ask you a favour for him. I will go with you quietly, but will you first help me to take him home?"

Javert said nothing, but he made a sign to the cabman, who brought the cab down as near to the bank as possible, and the insensible Marius was placed in it by the two men. Jean Valjean then entered, and then Javert, who, having asked for the address of Marius' grandfather, gave it to the coachman. It was a very long drive, and when they reached the house everyone was in bed, but they succeeded in rousing a man-servant, and Valjean and he carried the young man up to a bedroom, while no one dared to wake his grandfather. Valjean then followed Javert once more into the cab and said: "One more favour; let me go and say good-bye to Cosette." Javert was not in the habit of granting favours to criminals, but strange and unaccustomed thoughts were passing through his mind; he gave the address to the coachman and plunged again into reflection. Soon they were at the end of the road, which was too narrow for the cab to pass up it; here Javert dismissed the cabman, to the surprise of Jean, who reflected, however, that there was a police-station not far off, to which they could walk. Javert further surprised him by not coming into the house with him, but waiting at the door.

With slow and painful steps the old man dragged himself up the stairs. He felt that this time was the last; he should be sent to the galley's for life, and he should never have energy to attempt another escape; but his chief thought was of Cosette—what should he say to her, and what would become of her, for surely Marius would not marry her, nor anyone else, when they knew that her father was a convict? At the first landing there was a window looking out on the street; Valjean leaned against it, and then started and put his head out. The street was empty! Javert had gone!

Javert had done what he had never in his life done before—he had given way to an impulse. He strode away till he came to a bridge at a place where the Seine rushes very swiftly, and there he stopped and considered. It was now about two o'clock in the morning; the bridge was quite deserted. A great conflict was going on in Javert's mind. He had just become aware of the great difference between man's justice and that of God; all his life had been spent in the service of the former, and he had never had a single doubt that he was doing right; and now he had deliberately set free an escaped convict! It is true that this convict had saved *his* life at the barricade, but that alone would not have decided Javert; it was the saintliness of his life, which had shown itself in so many ways, that produced the awful struggle in the inspector's soul between the two ideals of justice. In the end the man could bear it no longer; he felt that he could not

change his whole life and become a different being—on the other hand his conscience would not allow him to go on with his present work after what he had just done—he mounted the parapet of the bridge, leant forward, and the rushing stream covered his last struggles.

Old people sleep lightly, and the grandfather of Marius was soon awakened by the noises in the house. He put on his dressing-gown and came to the bedroom from which the sounds proceeded. He was ninety years old, and though he had been strong, the sorrow of losing Marius, whom he had dearly loved, had broken him down lately. On the bed was stretched the body, apparently lifeless, of his grandson. A doctor had already arrived, but was unable to say whether there was any life left or not. The old grandfather was wild with misery; he cried:

“ Ah, Marius, you have come back at last—dead! This is what I expected from your republicanism, your fighting, your despising of old folks like me! And I remember you with your little spade in the park, digging holes, which I filled up with my cane so that you shouldn’t be scolded! He was such a sweet little child; when he came into my room in the morning I would pretend to be severe with him, but he knew better, he was like the sunshine coming in! And then he went off after these new-fangled notions and left his old grandfather! Well, you ungrateful cub ” (turning to Marius once more) “ it’s all over this time, and my heart is broken; I shall soon be in my grave too, the sooner the better; and as you have let yourself get

killed in these horrible barricades in disobedience to me, I am even glad of your death!"

At this moment Marius gently opened his eyes and gazed at the old man.

"Marius!" cried he. "Marius, my little one, my child, my darling! You are alive!" and he fell down fainting.

The rest may be told shortly; Marius recovered, and his grandfather, who never dared to oppose him again, for fear of losing him a second time, made no objection to his marriage with Cosette. Jean Valjean gave her up with no sign of the tremendous renunciation which he was making of the one being who was his entirely; he refused to live with them, and had a little house of his own at some distance; his one joy was to see Cosette occasionally, and when he died, which was not long after these events, Cosette and Marius were by his side.

POSTSCRIPT

TO MY READERS

Dear Children,

You will, I think, agree with me that there is nothing uglier than ingratitude; so if you have enjoyed this story, do not forget to be grateful to Victor Hugo.

And if you wish, when you grow up, to know what sort of school Cosette went to at the convent, and how Thénardier behaved at the Battle of Waterloo, and so on, then you must read the volumes which contain the whole wonderful story in French, as Victor Hugo wrote it.

I. G. FORTEY.